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"OUT OF CHARITY."

CHAPTER V.

GETTING AT THE TRUTH.

OUR friend Mrs. Ferrier, as the train bore her back from grim Birmingham, and home to gay Leamington, felt by no means gratified with the results of the day. If she had not been the dupe of another's cunning, she had been tricked by her own expectations; and that is usually the more galling humiliation of the two. She got a momentary glimpse of a letter in her son's hands, and the sight of it fanned her failing energies into a flame again.

The writer of the cherished letter was surely the detested Miss March. That young lady might be exulting in the thought that Richard would soon be irrevocably hers. "But no!" Mrs. Ferrier said to herself,— "no! until I actually know that the thing is beyond all cure, not one thing will I leave undone that can prevent it. I'll have this disgusting mystery probed, and sifted, and turned inside out, and, in short, made as clear and certain as though it had been performed in the middle of the day, and in the most public part of London. To-morrow morning I'll think of some means of getting at those doctors who used to frequent Scarlington House. I'll bring them—or one of them—to book. I'll get at the truth, if, in doing so, I make an enemy of the whole world."

On the following morning she and Richard met as usual at breakfast.

"Do you often hear from Minchley, my dear Richard?" was Mrs. Ferrier's first question to him. She asked nothing now without a purpose in it.

"No, seldom indeed. I begged so hard of Eva to let me have an answer to my last, that she did write yesterday,—but very briefly."

"Oh! And she persists in that noble self-denial which both you and I appreciate and admire so much?"

"Yes. Oh, how mistaken she is in me! She fancies—if any discovery should occur—that I should regret uniting my lot to hers. I cannot convince her that to have *her* would outweigh everything. I write and urge it upon her every day."

"Well, it's very honourable in her, and I have no doubt we shall find her parentage to be quite satisfactory. I'm going to make a few inquiries by-and-bye. You can tell her so. And I've no doubt we shall make a delightful discovery."

Mrs. Ferrier had no belief in the sincerity of Eva's hesitation. The girl knew she had got poor Richard safe, and thought fit to appear self-denying. Richard's mother felt a bitterness towards the young woman out of all proportion to anything she had ever previously felt in her life. Let all due allowance be made for her. This unwelcome affair had come to turn into bitterness and anxiety the happiest portion of her life.

Richard had come safely out of the dangers of the war,—dangers which he need never encounter again. With a good name, a good property, good looks, and withal a hero's laurels, there was hardly any family which could count itself dishonoured by an alliance with him. There was hardly any prospect for him that she was not justified in forecasting. And now—now, just when she thought herself sitting down to a life-long feast of happiness, a bitter draught of disappointment and disgrace was put up to her lips to be drunk. Richard was going to out-fool the maddest matrimonial fool of whom Mrs. Ferrier had ever heard. In bygone years she had felt afraid lest Mr. Nicholas, her brother-in-law, should marry his cook or housekeeper, and so deprive Richard of all his expectations. Poor, unassuming Mrs. Check little knew of how much suspicion she had been the object. Now, indeed, Mrs. Ferrier would have been only too glad if uncle Nicholas had been alive to support her with all the influence his money would give him.

However, fate had made her self-dependent; and the dependence need not prove a vain one.

She had bethought herself of a way, curious but safe, in which she might reach the unknown gentleman whom her brother-in-law had beheld in the moonlit parlour of Scarlington House. He was, no doubt, to be identified with one of the five several doctors named by Charlotte. Mrs. Ferrier called to mind the popular disposition to bestow the doctor's degree upon all who practise medicine. Possibly none of the five were "doctors" in strict form of speech. Our friend was no such medical maniac as poor Lady Anne, but she was acquainted with one eminent physician in Leamington. And he, at her request, lent her a catalogue of all the medical men in existence throughout England. She was not long in turning it over. Messrs. Progg and Starver were dead. Doctor Stuffington—Mrs. Ferrier's acquaintance himself informed her—was still

in lucrative London practice. He had always borne an unblemished name, and could hardly (our friend considered) be the hero of that horrible night.

The names of Messrs. Waxworth and Lacy were still on the list of surgeons; and nothing particular of good or bad was reported about them. A London directory revealed the abodes of the three gentlemen; and with this information, so rapidly and so easily gained, Mrs. Ferrier walked away towards one of the best of the Leamington streets.

There was a house, with sundry portraits—photographs, and of other kinds—in the windows and about the door; and to this house Mrs. Ferrier betook herself. Arrived there, she asked to speak with Mr. Dashwell.

Mr. Dashwell presented himself at once. He was an artist, whom Mrs. Ferrier, by seasonable patronage and recommendation, had laid under gratitude to herself. And he was now, unconsciously, to help her towards the great discovery.

“Mr. Dashwell,” she said, “if you are disengaged, might I speak to you in the room at the back?”

That room at the back was a painting-room. Mr. Dashwell eagerly led the way. He set a chair for the lady, and awaited what she had to say.

“Mr. Dashwell, I know you must be busy, and I won’t keep you very long. I suppose you’ve plenty of work on your hands?”

“In a great measure, thanks to your kindness, I get on pretty well; Mrs. Ferrier. I assure you I don’t know how much to thank you for it.”

“Well, well, Mr. Dashwell, I’m truly glad to hear you are succeeding. Now I come to ask you to do me a great favour.”

“*That*, Mrs. Ferrier, I feel to be quite impossible. After all you have done for me, any return I could make would be only a very poor payment of a debt.”

“I’m going to put you to the proof at once, Mr. Dashwell. I want you, if you will, to sketch a fancy scene for me. I’ll just describe it—as it’s written down here; and then you’ll see exactly what I mean.”

And Mrs. Ferrier pulled out of her workbag a written paper, and prepared to read it. Mr. Dashwell took up a pencil and some paper, to write it down as she read it.

“But, first (you won’t ask me to give any reason for it), but I should be glad if you would not mention it to any one—not to any one. I’m quite prepared to pay any sum you think fit.”

“Mrs. Ferrier, you may be sure that I won’t dream of naming it to anybody. As to payment, you distress me by speaking of it; only too happy, I am sure, to serve you in any single thing.”

“Very well, I’ll take you at your kind word. I’ll read the description of what I want drawn. You’ll think it a very odd fancy in me. However, here it is.”

"‘A parlour, with the moonlight streaming in through the open French window.’" Mr. Dashwell wrote down those words, and waited for what was to follow. "‘The parlour otherwise in darkness. At the window, and looking out of it, a man carrying a child in his arms. Outside, and close to the window, *a woman*, in the shadow of the parlour; a tall screen somewhere near the window; and a statue of a Moorish slave, or some such figure, with a basket of flowers.’ That, I think, is all, Mr. Dashwell; and a very nonsensical idea you must think it, I am sure."

"Not at all, Mrs. Ferrier. A very striking idea. Very picturesque indeed, with a strong dash of the mysterious in it. Is the picture to have any title? or must it be left to suggest a title for itself?"

"Why, I think, Mr. Dashwell, you may as well put a name to it. You can call it ‘The Secret Infanticide.’ Yes, that will do very well. But I must again beg of you not to name it to a single soul."

"Most assuredly, Mrs. Ferrier. Do you want to have it done quickly?"

"Every hour, I may say, is of consequence to me, Mr. Dashwell. But I want three or four copies of it; three at the least."

"Hm! that ’ll take some little time. Suppose I were to photograph it? You might have any number of copies then, you know."

Mrs. Ferrier caught at this suggestion with eagerness.

The scheme she had in view, if not already guessed at, may be very easily explained.

One of the five medical men whose names she had got from Mrs. Walsh was (probably) the man whom her brother-in-law had seen on that memorable March night in 1838. Of those five, two were dead; three were surviving still. If the actor in that dark transaction were yet living, it would surely shake him out of his wicked secrecy to be suddenly informed that the horrid affair was not forgotten even now. Sending him a picture of the affair would be much more startling than attacking him by a written accusation. It would leave him with no knowledge as to the exact insight into the guilty secret obtained by the sender. It would involve no acknowledgment that the inquirer stood in need of proof, and knew not on whom to fix the guilt.

He would at once assume that the unknown person who had rescued the infant had at length fixed the guilt where it ought to rest; and he would be ready and eager to purchase secrecy as to his own share in it, by revealing the name and condition of his employer.

But what if he were one of those two doctors who had since died? Even then, those men who received it would recognize the parlour they must often have seen. Indeed, they should be favoured with names and places to remind them; and any suspicious circumstances which had crossed their notice in Scarlington House would be brought very forcibly to their memories. However, it was most earnestly to be hoped that the hero of that evil night was amongst the living, and not the dead.

Mrs. Ferrier thought how useful it might be to produce her pictorial appeal at any time, and at the shortest notice; so she begged Mr. Dashwell to get all completed without any delay. He promised to satisfy her impatience as nearly as he could.

“This is Saturday,” he said; “and I could do a little at it to-morrow. I think I may promise to bring you them on Monday morning, Mrs. Ferrier.”

But a few days before, Mrs. Ferrier would have been greatly grieved at the thought of inducing anybody to labour on Sunday.

But her devotion to the great object of her pursuit had pretty nearly (for the time being) extinguished every other devotion. If repeating the Liturgy backwards way on, or playing a game of cards in her pew, would have availed to detach her son from Miss March, I greatly fear that her end would have reconciled even to means as outrageous as these.

She passed a weary two days after her visit to Mr. Dashwell. Sunday was now no more a pleasant day to Mrs. Ferrier. She felt that Sunday was Miss March’s day. It was the day on which that baleful influence was free to work, unchecked by any counter-influence of her own.

She could not enjoy being alone with Richard. For the one topic on which he was most anxious to talk was just that one upon which she could only speak warily and deceptively.

Just about noon on Monday, Mr. Dashwell came in to announce that his work was completed.

“I thought, Mrs. Ferrier,” he said, “that you would like me to give them into your own hands.”

“Certainly, Mr. Dashwell; and thank you a thousand times.”

Mr. Dashwell had not much troubled himself with the reason for this lady’s odd whim.

He thought it most probable that some novel had taken a firmer hold of her fancy than she was willing to confess; or that she was even meditating a novel of her own, and gathering in a few choice horrors for its embellishment.

He had executed his work exceedingly well, and had brought with him two dozen photographs of the scene as suggested.

The plate he would either keep or destroy, as Mrs. Ferrier was willing. She desired that it might be destroyed. And once again she urged payment upon him, he declining as before. And with a final expression of thanks on her side, and a final promise of secrecy on his (both entirely sincere), the interview ended at once.

Left to herself, Mrs. Ferrier took out three of the photographs (they were small in size), and enclosed them severally in three large envelopes. Those envelopes she addressed, one by one, to each of the three practitioners; to wit, Doctor Stuffington, Mr. Waxworth, and Mr. Lacy. Inside each envelope she wrote, in as masculine a handwriting as she could assume,—

“If you would keep from the knowledge of the world the affair of which this picture may remind you, you will act wisely in communicating with *H. S., Post Office, Warwick*. Remember S—g—n House, Fulham, and the night of the *seventh of March, 1838!*”

Mrs. Ferrier then carefully stowed away the remaining photographs in her most private drawer. As carefully did she place the three letters in her pocket; order a fly to wait on her as speedily as possible; and, as soon as it was ready, drive over to Warwick, and to the post-office. There she deposited her letters in the box, and gave a brief direction to the postmaster,—

“If you get any letters for ‘*H. S.*,’ Mr. Stamp, may I beg of you at once to send them on to me? Pray remember ‘*H. S.*,’ and send them under cover, by all means. Don’t let anybody know but yourself, if you can help it.”

“Certainly, ma’am. I’ll take care you get them. And there’ll be no likelihood of anybody knowing. I’ll see to it, ma’am.”

For Mrs. Ferrier was highly popular with her inferiors in station. Proud people very often both merit and obtain this favour. And our friend felt her advantage in this respect very vividly just now. As far as she could see, to trust Mr. Stamp was the better and safer course. If she called or sent for the letters, she or her messenger might be watched and traced.

By the arrangement she had made the chance of discovering her identity with “*H. S.*” would be decidedly diminished.

This was on Monday, the 9th of June. Accordingly, the morning of Tuesday, the 10th, brought all her three letters to their respective destinations in London. And Dr. Stuffington, of Brook Street; Mr. Waxworth, of Wimpole Street; and Mr. Lacy, of New Burlington Street,—all (pretty much at the same moment) received each a large letter with the Warwick postmark.

Doctor Stuffington was in ill-health, and temper to correspond. Bestowing just one glance at the photograph and its title, he set it down as a piece of stupid satire, designed by some homœopathist. For homœopathy was to Doctor Stuffington what Popery is to Mr. Whalley. Without so much as looking at the written paper inside, he tossed envelope, photograph, and all into the fire; for he enjoyed a fire in all but the very hottest weather. And I doubt if, when a day or two had elapsed, he so much as remembered the matter. He certainly never spoke about it. Mr. Waxworth sat for some minutes turning from the picture to the letter, and back again, with a strangely puzzled amusement. He finally put both in his pocket. Mr. Lacy looked at them in a bewilderment which (to look at his face) had more of trouble than of pleasure in it. He was a little late in setting out on his visits that morning, and somewhat absent and embarrassed when he did.

After he had cleared away the cases which pressed most for attendance,

he walked to Charing Cross, went into a stationer's, and wrote a letter, which it may be our privilege at once to read. It was,—

"‘*H. S.*’ may look for the desired information within a few days."

This was all he wrote. He placed it in the post-office, and took a cab, giving to the driver no more definite direction than "Stepney."

To Stepney, therefore, he was driven. He dismissed the cab somewhere in the Commercial Road and turned into a by-street which led in the direction of the river, on foot. He walked into a neighbourhood which (except by saying that it lay close to the Thames) we need not particularly describe.

Very near the shore there stood a long, low, one-storied range of building, detached from all the houses near it, and surrounded by an iron railing. On the front, which stood back from the street by some yards, was an inscription which told you that this building was Lady Scunthorpe's House of Refuge.

Lady Scunthorpe was an excellent lady of fortune and of rank, who, more than 120 years ago, had herself retired to that grand universal refuge which, sooner or later, is opened for us all. But while on earth, and (as the inscription made known) in the year 1714, she had established and endowed this Refuge; providing for eight poor women, who should be received and maintained therein; and also for one or two officials, for the better preservation of the charity.

At that time Stepney was a pleasant country village, enlivened by the great city so near at hand. But now the once secluded Refuge was encompassed by the town.

It was well known that the ground which it occupied would, if set at liberty, produce a sum which might maintain thrice the number of those who now received its benefits. And equally well was it known that, if good Lady Scunthorpe could have foreseen so altered a state of things, she would have prepared and provided for such an extension. But her trustees felt bound by what she had said in 1714, not at all by what she would have said in 1856. And Lady Scunthorpe's eight old women—and never more than eight—continued, by their antiquated costume (costume of housemaids in the reign of Anne), as well as by their rural-seeming Refuge-house, to tell of the time gone by. Otherwise, Lady Scunthorpe's trustees were patterns to all such bodies as theirs. The eight old folks had their rightful share of the bequest as it stood, and were always considerably treated.

Mr. Lacy rang the bell at the iron gate, and, on its being quickly answered, expressed his desire of seeing Mrs. Beakham. The portress, probably the youngest and nimblest of all the eight, at once admitted him, and showed him to Mrs. Beakham's door. Mr. Lacy was very quickly inside of it, and face to face with the woman he had come to see. Each inmate of the Refuge enjoyed two small rooms. It was now near one o'clock, and Mrs. Beakham was watching over the fire the saucepan

in which her dinner was developing itself. She looked to be about sixty years old. She had the face and air of one who in life has known much of the rough, and little of the smooth. Her visitor hastily put his hand to his breast pocket, as if to assure himself that something was there, and then he spoke at once.

"You don't remember me, Mrs. Beakham, I suppose?"

"Why, sir—why, really I—why, deary me—can it be Doctor Lacy?"

"Yes, Mrs. Beakham, my name *is* Lacy."

The woman looked pleased. Mr. Lacy's countenance hardly denoted any reciprocal pleasure, but of his own accord he proceeded to sit down.

It was a plain, comfortable room; and amidst the modern monotony of houses and streets, Lady Scunthorpe's home was, as far as eyesight went, a Refuge to all who so much as looked at it. Mrs. Beakham gave one or two progs with a fork at the contents of her saucepan, then covered it up again, and with a real welcome in her face sat down in a chair herself.

"Well, to be sure, sir, to think of seeing you here! It really looks to me just like old times."

"Does it, Mrs. Beakham? I dare say I shall make it look a little more like old times when I tell you what I've come to say, though perhaps you can guess what that is, Mrs. Beakham?"

"No, sir, that I'm sure I never can," said the woman, more puzzled by the angrily suspicious tone of his words than by the nature of the words themselves.

"You *can't* guess?" went on Mr. Lacy, exactly like a counsel attacking a refractory witness. "Oh, very well. No great necessity that you should. I'll *tell* you. Do you recollect, Mrs. Beakham, paying a visit to a certain house in Fulham, late one night, more than eighteen years ago, when I had the great honour of receiving and entertaining you there? Do you remember the little affair which occasioned your visit, and in which (though I don't come to talk about *that*) you rather took upon yourself too much?"

"I remember what it was, sir—yes, of course;" and the woman looked as if she did not thoroughly understand him.

"Very well, Mrs. Beakham; I never thought you behaved very well to me in cutting the matter so short as you did. But I never thought until this very day that you had done anything worse. But I find you have been doing a great deal worse. You have talked about the matter to others."

"To others, sir! No, never. Never once to a single soul, if you'll believe me, sir. Never once in all these years!"

"Now, now, my good woman! if there be one thing which I detest it is—a useless untruth. *I know* that you have gossiped about it. And there's no telling who may know it, or what steps they may take in consequence of it. You'll have yourself to thank if the excellent people who

manage this Refuge hear of the matter, and take it into their heads that you're not a proper person to remain here.”

“I'm sure, sir,” said the woman, who was crying now—“I'm sure, sir, if there's a single creature as knows of it, it isn't through anything I've said. And it'll be a very cruel thing if I'm to suffer for it, after all these long years too.”

“So then, Mrs. Beakham, you persist in saying that you never said a word about the matter to any one?” and as Mr. Lacy said this, he put his hand into the pocket of his coat, and held it there, as if its next movement were to be regulated by the woman's reply. That reply was a simple repetition of the previous denial.

“There then, Mrs. Beakham. Just look at *that!*” and with these words he whipped out of his pocket and placed full before her the photograph which that morning had brought him. “Yes, Mrs. Beakham, that pretty little picture was sent to me this morning in a letter from Warwick, but from *whom*, you ought to know better than I can. Now tell me again that you never talked to any one about it.”

“Indeed, sir, whether you choose to believe me or not, I never did. But what does this picture mean, sir? It's a picture of what happened—and yet you see, sir, it isn't.”

“Of course, Mrs. Beakham. It's just such a fancy picture of the matter as a person would draw who got hold of the right story by the wrong end, do you see? If you couldn't quite hold your tongue about it, why, you'd better have told it all right out. They needn't have made us both so much worse than we ever were. I hope you're flattered by that likeness of yourself, as given in this precious picture. Charming countenance, isn't it?”

The artist, unknown to them, but known to us as Mr. Dashwell of Leamington, had been guided by the nature of the subject supplied to him, and had made the woman at the window look as hideously murderous as you can possibly imagine.

“Well, sir, it's a wicked shame, and it's too bad, whoever has done it. I can only say again that I never did tell anybody; and, as you say, I shouldn't be likely to make it so much worse than it was, if I did.”

Heavy as appearances weighed against her, Mr. Lacy was beginning to think that Mrs. Beakham spoke the truth. But how, in that case, could so many of *the details* be known?

“Mrs. Beakham,” he said, “I don't accuse you of intentionally doing any mischief.”

“No, sir, surely not; for it's I that should be first to suffer, you know. But you said just now that I had displeased you in something or other I did at the time. I really didn't know that you'd any fault to find with me.”

“Why, it wasn't fair and open of you, Mrs. Beakham, though in itself what you did might be all very well. You took the child away

of your own accord, and without asking me. That was not proper behaviour to me."

"The child! Why, sir, I laid the poor little thing on the table, as you told me when you asked me to come into the dining-room,—surely you remember, sir. I never touched it afterwards, and for aught I ever knew, she may be living there still."

"Upon my word, but you act the part of innocence uncommonly well! But you'll not quite argue me out of my own senses. Why, woman, what is the good of your persisting in this? You had a glass—your glass, filled several times, and in different manners—in the dining-room. Then—and I quite coincided with you—you said you had had enough, and would go. You did go. I waited just to put the decanters away, and then I went to speak to a certain person up-stairs. Then I went down into the little parlour, and found the child gone. I could only suppose that you had gone up-stairs after me, a thing which you had no right to do; that you had heard a few words which passed between that other person and myself, and carried the baby away. What else could I possibly think?"

"Sir, you surprise me so much that I feel as if my wits were going. When I left the dining-room I walked straight out through the parlour. I never so much as looked at the table where I left the child."

"Well, Mrs. Beakham, the greater fool I am in believing you, the greater your wickedness in deceiving. But really and truly, I must and do believe you."

"You may indeed, sir, though I oughtn't, perhaps, to wonder if you don't. But oh, sir! what are we, both of us, to do? And who can be contriving against us after all these years? And what does it all mean?"

"I came here to get you to find out for me. Don't be frightened, as if we were in any danger. There's no danger if we both hold our tongues. What can be charged against us? Just let me repeat the thing to you, Mrs. Beakham:—More than eighteen years ago, you (being a monthly nurse) and I (being a doctor, wanting more practice than he could always get) were very frequently brought together. One day I came to tell you that a lady wanted to adopt a child—to adopt a child from its birth; that if you could find any mother willing to part with a child from its birth, there was a handsome reward to be divided between that mother and yourself. Don't look as if you were before a judge. Where was the harm in that? The charity which thinks no evil enforced me to believe—enforces me to believe now—that the lady did this with the full knowledge and consent of all who had a right to know or to object. The secrecy was only to beguile the world; and who is the world, that it is to pry into our affairs, and ask whether we adopt other people's children or not? Well, you happened to have a client very suitable for our purpose. We refused—though she would hardly come into the plan on any other terms—to let her know how her child was to be disposed of.

Plainly, this picture is not of *her* contriving, for she could not guess without a miracle at the manner of our doing it, and she never could follow you to see. However, we planned it all, as you know, as we had a right to plan it. The key was to be left in the garden door, and at about six o'clock in the evening you were to go and fetch it, locking the door outside, which I conclude you did. About twelve o'clock you brought the baby. I met you at the French window, just as this admirable picture represents me. But instead of having any baby in my arms, I only held a large bag stuffed with old things, and the money inside them. You know you were frightened of being robbed; and, moreover, did not want your husband to know how much you had earned. Then we had some talk. You were afraid of walking home, and I told you it was all nonsense, and added some good advice—I trust it did not quite fall to the ground—as to taking good care of the money after you had got it home. Then I asked you into the dining-room to get some refreshment. And I suspect all your fright about going home was nothing but a hint that you would like a glass. Well, that is all we know, if I am to believe you. In some unaccountable manner some person has got hold of the story, though, as I said, by the wrong end. Now as long as we are both quiet we cannot be molested for our share in the matter. If we begin inquiring and excusing ourselves, of course we as good as confess ourselves in the wrong. Don't you quite see that, Mrs. Beakham?"

"Why, yes, sir; of course I see whatever you see, sir."

"Just so, Mrs. Beakham, and you are wise in doing so."

"But, sir, who could have taken the poor little child, and what became of it?"

"I have my reasons for thinking that the child afterwards—not many months afterwards—found her way into the very same house. Until just now I supposed that you had taken her back to her mother; that the lady, whom I need not name, had afterwards changed her mind, and (through you) had adopted the little thing. But now the matter looks stranger than any matter I ever could have imagined. I'll try very carefully to ascertain who is moving in it now, and whatever I hear you shall know. And now, Mrs. Beakham, I'll say good morning."

And Mr. Lacy went out. Mrs. Beakham resumed the preparation of her dinner—a dinner which her neglect had spoiled beyond repair. And I trust that Mr. Lacy's visit may have been the herald of no more serious disaster to the ex-monthly nurse.

Her visitor went away, not altogether sure what notice he should take of the threat so strangely conveyed to him that morning. Should he take no notice of it at all? The safety of such a course could only be established by a more complete knowledge of the exact extent of "H. S.'s" information. Should he endeavour to ascertain, in the first place, who "H. S." was? That might only end in breaking down the screen of

uncertainty which yet protected himself. One or two things were clear enough. His unknown correspondent had got hold—though very wrongly and imperfectly—of the awkward affair. That person, imagining he (or she) knew a part of it, was trying to frighten him into telling the whole of it. How had the affair, so carefully shrouded in darkness, ever got into the light—even such distorted and discoloured light as this? Again, with what motive was the unknown person at Warwick seeking to terrify him into confession?

Mr. Lacy, instead of returning westward in any omnibus, took a cab for the journey, that he might meditate the two questions at leisure. Who had whispered abroad, in such perverted fashion, the secret of that bygone March night? Not the real mother of the child; not the false mother of the child: not any person to whom their secret might have been voluntarily confessed or incautiously betrayed; for in that case the picture would have embodied the truth, not so frightful a distortion of the truth as made the actual guilt comparative innocence. Mrs. Beakham he felt he must acquit of having effected the mischief by her tongue. Somebody (unlikely as it appeared on other grounds) must have witnessed the scene, and misunderstood its real nature. One of the servants must have been wakeful and suspicious on that night. Personal fear, or the consciousness of some secret of their own, might have kept the spectator silent both at that time and afterwards. But how account for a silence maintained so many years being broken at last? The curiosity which had lain dormant for eighteen years should surely have slept peacefully for ever. And this thought carried Mr. Lacy on to the second question which it concerned him to solve,—With what *motive* was the startling appeal made to him? With a wish to bring the guilty to justice? One actuated by that desire would scarcely appeal to the supposed criminal himself. "H. S." could never seriously have meant the appeal to signify, "Come, confess and be hanged, as you deserve!" *Money* was, in all probability, the strong and simple motive of it all. Mr. Lacy knew the folly of complying with such extortioners as "H. S." would probably prove to be. He had known instances in which a compliance with the first demand had, from the confession of guilt involved in it, empowered the extortioner to go on with increasing rapacity and with growing assurance. Assuredly the fear which lays a man, guilty or innocent, a prey to extortion, is the best possible illustration of the saying that "nothing is so rash as fear." Mr. Lacy was not rash, because he was not timid.

"No, Mr. 'H. S., Warwick,'" he said, as he re-perused the picture and letter in his cab; "or, as I am half inclined to think I ought to call you, *Mrs.* 'H. S., Warwick,' for I fancy I detect a lady's hand as well in the writing as in the whole idea of the thing. No, my conscientious madam, you had better have kept in your pocket the money this photograph must have cost you. Not one farthing would you ever

get out of me, not if you could hang me for refusing, as very likely you think you can.”

There was still time to send off a second letter to the subject of this wise resolution. It might be odd that the note promising a further communication, and the promised communication itself, should both arrive together. But the practical advantage of shortening the suspense would fully compensate for that. So Mr. Lacy, in the same place in which he had written his morning's letter, dashed off another to the same address. It was quite as brief as the former, and was as follows:—

“Will ‘*H. S.*’ be so good as to state the *exact nature* of the information desired in his (or her) letter? Address—‘Wm. Lacy, Esq., New Burlington Street, London.’”

Mr. Lacy felt happier when he had put this letter into the post. “Clearly,” so he thought, “my photographic friend must come to the real matter now. Thursday's post will bring me a Warwick letter, demanding so many pounds as the price of secrecy; and Thursday's post, moreover, will take back to Warwick just this rejoinder:—‘If Mr. Lacy is annoyed by any more attempts at extortion, he will put the matter into the hands of the police.’”

But, alas! how miscalculated we often find those arrangements which appear perfect wisdom at the time! While Mr. Lacy's letter was still lying in the box where he had placed it, he was brought to regret the having written it. He was led to look on his wise stroke as a piece of short-sighted folly. We will tell how that happened; not that we need feel so great an interest in Mr. Lacy, but because we desire to show, link by link, the chain which was drawing after it such important issues to our story.

About half an hour after posting his second letter, Mr. Lacy met, on foot in the street, his fellow-surgeon and friend, Mr. Waxworth. Mr. Waxworth had succeeded him in the confidence, never long continued in the same quarter, of Lady Anne Somerby in Scarlington House. But that was years ago; and any little professional jealousy which might have arisen therefrom had long since vanished away.

Mr. Lacy would have very much liked to know if his companion had ever heard any rumours of the affair so wickedly distorted by his photographic friend. But prudence kept him silent. They exchanged a few words—of no concern to us,—and were on the point of separating, when Mr. Waxworth, suddenly arresting his friend's departure, put his hand into his coat pocket.

“I want you,” he said, “to look at something that came to me by post this morning. Look here! It's a queer subject, but uncommonly well done. I've no idea who sent it me.”

And Mr. Waxworth placed before his friend a duplicate of the picture which was then absorbing all his thoughts. He had presence of mind enough to betray no previous acquaintance with it.

"What can it mean?" he said.

"I'm sure I can't tell. But you can look at what accompanied it." They were now in a very quiet street; and Mr. Waxworth handed the other surgeon a verbatim copy (name excepted) of the menacing inquiry which had so disturbed himself.

"What a fool I have been!" he thought. "'*H. S.*' was in doubt upon which of us to fix; and I've just gone and enabled her to fix upon me. I must try and get Waxworth to write a letter just like my own."

Mr. Waxworth pointed out the names and dates that professed to assign a place and time to the pictured tragedy.

"I suppose this must be Scarlington House that is meant," he said; "it was just about that time that I used to attend Lady Anne Somerby. What a rascally piece of impudence! is it not? Pray, have you had one of these things sent you?"

"Well, I can't exactly say" (for it would not be safe to tell a falsehood which the course of events might compel him to retract): "I was in a hurry this morning, and didn't open all my letters before going out. I shall see presently."

"Why I ask is, because *you* once visited at Scarlington House. I remember you said you had found Lady Anne a very lucrative patient. So she was, as long as one could keep her. But what do you think this vile thing can mean?"

"'Mean!' oh, I felt sure—I feel sure—that it's just an attempt at extortion. That's all."

"Well, I think so too. Of course I know there isn't a shadow of foundation in the story. Lady Anne is dead; and where Mrs. Campion is nobody seems to have known for years and years past. Else the thing would be more their concern than mine. As it is, I think I shall just put it into the hands of the police. What do you think, Lacy?"

"Why, I don't think I would do that just now. You see, the party calling himself '*H. S.*' does not say a word about *money*. There is no direct attempt at extortion. That, no doubt, will come by-and-bye. I'll tell you what I would do if it were my case;—what I *shall* do if I find any such letter when I get home to-day. I would just write and ask '*H. S.*' to be so good as to explain what was wanted—*exactly* what was wanted. Then, most likely, you'll get a formal demand for money; and that will be full matter for a charge of extortion."

"Certainly, certainly; what you propose has something to recommend it. I'll consider about it." Here Mr. Waxworth looked at the photograph again.

"There's one rather odd thing, Lacy (if I'm not taking up too much of your time); and that is, though I'm sure no such thing as this ever happened in Scarlington House as I knew it, yet I keep looking at this picture as if (somehow) it were not quite new to me; as if I had dreamt the thing, or had read it in some story-book long ago. Well, we shall

meet to-morrow at St. George's, you know; and perhaps I shall be able to tell you then,—not that it signifies much.” And then they parted for the time.

Mr. Waxworth went away, in doubt whether he should follow Mr. Lacy's advice, and try to entrap “H. S.” into an overt attempt at extortion; or whether he should follow his own first impulse, and place the picture and letter in the hands of the police. Eventually he did neither, and took refuge from the conflict of opinion in the comfortable alternative of letting the matter alone.

Mr. Lacy went home, not by any means well pleased with himself, and heartily wishing that Thursday morning was come. On Wednesday he met Mr. Waxworth on a professional matter at the hospital. When the business which had called them there was over, Mr. Waxworth brought up the subject of their yesterday's conversation.

“Well, Lacy” (they were now in a room appropriated to medical consultations, and were quite alone together), “did *you* find a *fac-simile* of that thing when you got home yesterday?”

“Yes, I actually did. And I treated it as I told you I should. I wrote and asked the wretch—whom I more than suspect of being a *she*-wretch—what he or she wanted.”

“Perhaps you were right. However, I doubt whether I shall take any notice of the thing. It's too contemptible, whoever is the doer of it. By the way, Lacy, you remember my saying yesterday that I fancied I had heard a story somewhere, of which the picture reminded me, but could not recollect how or where?”

“Yes, I remember you said so.” And Mr. Lacy's look of genuine interest encouraged the other to go on.

“Well, it flashed upon my mind just as I was getting into bed last night. I very well remember now. My sister, who visits at Minchley now and then, was telling me—I don't know how long ago—of a manuscript she had been allowed to look at there. She said the names and places were all left out in it, but that it *professed* to be a true story (I dare say it was a bare-faced make-up, after all, but my good sister won't hear of my saying so). She favoured me with a fragment of it second-hand. I'll just epitomize to you as much as I remember of it. It seems the gentleman who appears in the double character of hero and historian of the adventure—the gentleman who, as my penetrating sister says, ‘writes as no mere story-teller would write,’—this gentleman (to call him so for the third time) once upon a time strayed into a garden for shelter from the rain, found himself locked in, walked up to the house, was somehow left by himself in a parlour—really I can't remember all the details,—went to sleep on the sofa, woke up in the middle of the night, and saw a man and woman standing at the window (just as in the picture, you know), with a baby whom they were about, between them, to kill. And then—I see you are interested in the story—the gentleman snatches

up the baby, runs out of the house as hard as he can, and saves the child ; and—a great deal more which I don't pretend to recollect. Now I'll tell you, Lacy, just what I think about the matter : this tale—which is very likely an extract from the *London Journal*, or some such publication,—this tale has got into the hands of somebody who believes it—actually swallows it. And that person, either in malice or (it may be) in sheer stupidity, has taken it into his head to fix it on Scarlington House. And they have found that both you and I, at one time, attended there. I intend to take no more notice of such an idiotic affair. But what do you think as to my theory ?"

"I? oh, I think there is very much to be said for it. Yes, I should really say it must be the act of a lunatic. I'll tell you if I hear anything more of it."

And Mr. Lacy was glad to feel he had not betrayed himself to Mr. Waxworth. He now knew that the secret so carefully guarded had been known all along to somebody who, for motives not easily fathomed, had never made his power felt until this moment. The matter was far more mysterious, far more perilous, than it had seemed at any former time. What would Thursday's post bring with it now ?

Mr. Lacy (he was a bachelor, as he deserved to be)—Mr. Lacy was seated over his solitary cup of coffee on Thursday morning, when the double rap, at once longed for and dreaded by him, was heard throughout his house. In half a minute more a letter from Warwick was lying before him. Of a certainty his judgment had not been at fault in forecasting the sex of his unknown correspondent.

Mrs. Ferrier, now confident that she had got the right fish on her hook, felt less necessity for concealment and manœuvring ; and this letter had been written in her natural hand.

Mr. Lacy turned it over once or twice before opening it, almost as if it had a will and purpose in itself, and he were beseeching it not to be too hard upon him. Then he dashed it open and read it, as we will read it :—

"Warwick, 11th June, 1856.

"H. S. replies at once to Mr. Lacy's letter. What she desires to know may be stated in very few words. She wishes to know *whose child* that was which was found under such extraordinary circumstances on that March night in the year 1838. If Mr. Lacy will enable H. S. to ascertain *that*, he will be troubled with no further inquiries, nor will any annoyance be given him on account of the very strange part played by him that night. And if Mr. Lacy will take the trouble to indicate some way by which this discovery may be made, without compromising himself, he may rest assured that his name need not, and shall not, be ever mentioned in connection with this affair."

Mr. Lacy read this letter over two or three times, and sat a long while musing over it. "It might have been worse," he reflected.

“Really, ‘H. S.,’ considering her opinion of me as a murderer, writes in a very conciliatory tone indeed.”

I really fear that Mrs. Ferrier’s natural horror of the crime she supposed Mr. Lacy to have meditated, was somewhat blunted by the thought (if that infant had indeed grown up into Miss March) how inconvenient a life hers was. Let the mother who is without ambition cast the first stone at Mrs. Ferrier. Mr. Lacy was not without the means of informing her as to the origin of the child in question. But then they were at such fatal cross-purposes that he was not sure of satisfying her, even by the course she had indicated herself. Suppose he were to tell her the truth—as much of the truth as could be told? And after about an hour of considering and reconsidering, he took his pen in hand, and out of all the conflicting and contradictory schemes which, in that hour, had been coursing through his brain, there issued at last the following letter to his friend of the Warwick post-office:—

“Mr. — is willing, once for all, to dispose of the matter in question by giving H. S. an answer to her last inquiry. He thinks it right to say, with whatever disbelief the denial may be received, that the real meaning of what was seen and heard on a certain night in 1838 has been totally misrepresented and mistaken. No such atrocious crime as that which is evidently laid to their charge was ever meditated or attempted by the persons concerned. On the contrary, they were deeply interested in preserving the child’s life, and, so far from thrusting it out of a desirable home, they were procuring it a good position in exchange for a very bad one. Mr. — will so far return good for evil—unjust aspersion by hazardous confidence—as to tell H. S. the name and residence, at that period, of the infant’s actual mother. Her name was Roberts, and she lived, when her child was born, at No. 8, Grove Terrace, one of the inferior streets near to Euston Square.

“Mr. — has now a further duty to perform towards himself and towards H. S. He protests against acknowledging himself bound, in this matter, by any kind of duty, or by any tie of interest. What he has declared may have been due to motives which, in the absence of knowledge, he must assume to be worthy of respect. Any attempt to draw him into acting or saying further will, he assures H. S., be met by total indifference on his part. He probably has not the power, and he certainly has not the intention, of aiding any scheme of discovery which H. S. may be setting on foot. All proceedings which may be taken, so as to involve attacks on his character, will be met by such protection to character as the law affords. This present letter, however sure H. S. may feel in herself, will never in any case be acknowledged by its writer. All further communications will be destroyed unread. Let H. S. just consider, if she meditates publicity, with what an improbable story she is about to appeal to the world. From the writer she will never hear more.”

Mr. Lacy penned this letter in a carefully artificial hand, and added neither day nor place by way of date. We need hardly add that he posted it himself, and upon the whole he thought he might put aside all

fear of any mischief arising. He had not objected, since H. S. desired to know the real parentage of the baby, to put her in the way of doing so. He had an old grudge working in him, which will be better explained at a future period, and he felt this partial disclosure of the offending person's secret to be only a just retaliation. Mrs. Ferrier was taken aback by the cool resolution of his letter, yet glad of such information as it contained. The inflexible refusal to tell any more, of itself proclaimed that the little revealed was probably true. The time was to come when Mrs. Ferrier was to look upon all this inquiring and discovering as the worst waste of her time that could have been. But at present the unwonted excitement was very pleasant indeed. Apart from the happy issue to which she trusted she was coming—the complete and final severance of Richard and Eva—there was a sense of power and importance which engrossed her whole inner life, and was for the time a welcome exchange for the dull decorums in which an English matron must commonly dwell. She accepted the compromise which it was the evident intent of Mr. Lacy to hold out to her, and lost no time in inquiring as to the existence and nature of "Mrs. Roberts."

We need not wait upon her proceedings step by step. After a week of rummaging in old London directories (bought or borrowed), and of writing to a private inquiry office, Mrs. Ferrier was put in possession of the ascertained facts, that, in the year 1838, and for some years afterwards, there had lodged at No. 8, Grove Terrace, Euston Square, a Mrs. Roberts; that the said Mrs. Roberts had always spoken of herself as a wife whose husband had deserted her; that, moreover, in the month of March, 1838, she had given birth "to a still-born child;" that she always appeared and spoke of herself as a most afflicted and unhappy woman; that, though straitened in means, she was never thought to be in actual want; that, moreover, some months before quitting her home near Euston Square (which took place in the summer of 1842), she was supposed to have got a considerable accession of income. It was further borne in mind, that only a few months before her quitting that abode she had been visited with a dangerous illness, and that a sister from Wales had come up to nurse her. It was believed that she had since made her home with that sister, but in what exact neighbourhood none who remembered these particulars of her London life were at all able to say.

Mrs. Ferrier, who had the manuscript very nearly by heart now, at once remembered that Eva had been found by Richard near Euston Square. That the Miss March whom uncle Nicholas had reared up out of charity, and the child he had snatched out of Scarlington House, were one and the same person, appeared almost a proved thing. Mrs. Ferrier went pitilessly on to disperse the glittering clouds, and show the bare, despicable, shameful secret which surely lay beyond them.

"Richard dear," she said, shortly after receiving the above intelligence—"Richard dear, I suppose you find Miss March adhere to her

resolution? Well, don't be discouraged. I've not been idle all this week, and I do believe I shall have a delightful surprise for you shortly. You don't think Miss March will renounce *you* if her birth should prove to be above yours?"

Richard's answer may be imagined—by every lover, at all events.

"Why," Richard's mother presently asked him—"why have the Ballows never tried to make out who Miss March is? I wonder at that."

"Because, knowing *what* she is, they think it a very paltry matter to trouble any person *who* she is. But, by the way, Mr. Ballow did tell me that a few years ago, when they were in London, he got hold of somebody who, he thought, would be really able to tell him something; but he said it all ended in his being about as wise as before, and I don't think he'll be in a hurry to move in the matter again."

Mr. Ballow knew that Richard's mamma looked unfavourably on his attachment to Eva, but he had no idea how intense was her dislike to it, much less was he aware of her desperate efforts to bring about some discovery which would extinguish her son's ardour in a burst of surprise and shame. So, in an answer to her urgent inquiry, he sent her a full and true account of the encounter, just four years before, with the red-faced woman of Eva's terrified remembrance. The history of that woman's behaviour, as detailed by herself, and as we have already narrated it (in the second chapter of this story), Mr. Ballow also imparted unreservedly to Mrs. Ferrier. This afforded strong confirmation of the brief confession vouchsafed by Mr. Lacy, for the name of Mrs. Roberts was a link between the two. Mrs. Ferrier now meditated how she might more surely lay hands on the yet unknown Mrs. Roberts. After a little considering, assisted by a remembrance of one or two novels she had at some time read, she obtained the insertion of the following advertisement in several Welsh newspapers:—

"If Mrs. Roberts, who was living at No. 8, Grove Terrace, near Euston Square, London, up to the year 1842, will apply to E. F., post-office, Leamington, Warwickshire, she may hear of something deeply interesting to herself, and may find her great loss repaired."

The month of June was well-nigh over before this notice met the eyes of the various readers in the Principality. Richard was at Leamington still, and his mother trusted that before he ran off to Minchley again Miss March's origin would be revealed in all its plebeian plainness. It was on the 2nd of June that she had started on her expedition to discover the source of Miss March, and it was on the 2nd of July that there came to her as "E. F.," &c., the following letter from Wales:—

"*Llynbbellyn, 1st July, 1856.*

"SIR [for, as was natural, the writer assumed 'E. F.' to be of the masculine gender].—Mrs. Roberts, who once lived in Grove Terrace, Euston Square, but whose home has for some years been in this place, has been greatly agitated by seeing the appeal addressed to her in the

Cambrian Advertiser. By her earnest desire—for her own intense feelings make her well-nigh incapable of acting for herself—I write earnestly to implore that the meaning of the notice may be promptly and fully explained. You will excuse my urgent request for speed, when I assure you that continued suspense is but too likely to be fatal, so afflicting has been her life, and so profound her present agitation. May I also ask you to extend your pardon to any undue omission in this letter, as I write it fresh from the surprise of a recent and startling discovery. Again entreating as full an explanation as you can afford, I am, your obedient servant,

MORGAN DOWLAS.

"Please to address—'Rev. Morgan Dowlas, Llynbwllyn, nr. Carnarvon, N. Wales.'"

Mrs. Ferrier, just as anxious for a discovery, and almost as sick of delay, as the strange Mrs. Roberts appeared to be, was very willing to obey the appeal, and afford a speedy reply. That reply was a brief abstract of Mr. Ferrier's MS., and such further explanations of her own as may be guessed without being indicated. She had long given over asking herself whether she were doing ultimate good or ultimate harm. She was sure that Richard might be deterred from the moral suicide he contemplated if the girl's parentage could really be brought to light, and she was equally sure that, without such discovery, the wretched boy was self-doomed. The Guy Fawkes energy which had sprung out of her motherly fear had reacted upon that fear, and made it more desperate and despotic than at the beginning. And truly you might as well have proposed to a leopardess to acquiesce in the loss of her cubs, as have entreated Mrs. Ferrier to consider the possible consequences of her present proceedings. Those proceedings were drawing to a crisis now. Two days after she had despatched her reply to Mr. Dowlas at Llynbwllyn, Captain Ferrier went away on a visit to his brother in Lincolnshire; and she herself received a second letter out of Wales, the nature and intent of which will be better explained by-and-bye.

CHAPTER VI.

MISS MARCH IS CLAIMED.

OUR Eva, not quite unconscious of all these inquiries, yet utterly unaware how keenly and eagerly they were pursued, had thoughts of her own at this time, which fully absorbed her mind and heart. In Mrs. Ballow she had a friend whose kindness never fell short, although there was not, on the great subject of all, a perfect sympathy between them. Mrs. Ballow really thought that Eva had protested, quite as much as she was bound to protest, against attaching Captain Ferrier's bright estate to her own birthless and nameless one. A man of six-and-twenty might be presumed to know his own mind.

Richard must have met scores of pretty girls who, had he looked for

beauty only, would have met his advances with the most gracious readiness. He and Miss March had fallen in love because they verily suited each other. The match was made in heaven. It was folly, irreverent folly, to be so scrupulous about confirming it on earth.

Mrs. Ballow, full of this idea, had some talk with Eva on a certain day very early in July.

"My dear," said the elder lady, after they had been talking it over some time—"my dear, I can only say, again and again, that if you really do end by refusing Captain Ferrier, you throw away such advantages as not one girl in a thousand can ever look for. As to *my* daughters, I no more look to any such thing for them than I look to have them made empresses and queens. My dear, believe me, I am quite in earnest."

"But, dear Mrs. Ballow, do you not see that the 'advantages' of the thing are just what lie in my way? I may be suspected—I am bound even to suspect myself—of loving Richard for the very sake of his money and his position; although, indeed, I do not *think* it is so."

"I know it is not, my dear girl. I know you to be far too independent, I should even say far too proud, to think or care what your husband could give you, or what he could make you. So do heed what I say, my love. I may have no right to speak to you as a mother would; but, if you will believe me, I feel all a mother's interest in you; and I feel all a mother's sorrow, to think that you may be throwing your happiness away."

"Dear, kind friend!" and Eva got up and threw her arms round Mrs. Ballow as she sat. "Dear, good Mrs. Ballow! I don't know why I should not look upon you as a mother. Until I knew you, poor, good Mrs. Check was the nearest approach to a mother that I ever knew; at least that I ever remember knowing; although the thought comes over me at times, that I once had a mother. When we were at the sea-side last summer, I fancied—as if it were a dream coming back to me—that I was once walking by the sea-side with a lady whom I called 'mamma.' Could it all have been a dream?"

"No, my dear, I think it very unlikely that it should. People dream of such things as they have seen, not of things entirely strange to them. It may be of immense importance to remember all you can. Great discoveries often arise from the merest trifles. Can you recollect no name—nothing about where you lived in those early days?"

"I fancy at times that I heard speak of my papa; that I was once told to come and see him; but that, as far as I now know, I never did see him. The little that I can remember besides we have talked over often and often. Certainly, I do not understand how I could have so much *idea* of what a mother is if I had *never* had one of my own."

"Well, my dear Eva, let us hope that all will come happily to light some day. Though I don't think much of Mrs. Ferrier's understanding, the inquiries she has thought fit to set on foot *may* lead to something, and

good may come out of evil. Meantime, try and think that you have some sort of a mother in me."

"Yes, you are indeed in some things better than a mother. I look on you as a sort of moveable mamma, Mrs. Ballow. I can take you off and on, you know; and when you bother me about Richard, I feel I must really put you by for the day."

"You good, affectionate, silly girl!" Mrs. Ballow said, returning the kiss with which, as a lump of sugar after a draught, Eva concluded her latest speech. "You good Eva! you've brought nothing but good to us ever since we first knew you. From an own daughter we could have expected no more; and I know I shall be horribly jealous of the real mamma when she does come to claim you. However, I never was angry with you until now, my dear,—until now, when you treat Captain Ferrier in such a way. I am sure you love him, and I am sure he loves you. What should keep you asunder?"

"His mother—I know she is a proud woman. I once heard my dear, kind guardian, Mr. Ferrier, say so. I do not think she would ever be reconciled to it."

"Bless me, child! people reconcile themselves to almost everything when it can't be helped. And suppose she won't? The captain is not dependent upon her; and I would not say that you ought to give way to her even if he were. 'Therefore shall a man——,' you know we read in the very beginning of the Bible, my dear. As my husband very admirably puts it, you have on your side both nature and revelation—both nature and revelation; and just the stupid, obstinate pride of an old and foolish woman against you. It's not a polite way of putting it, I know; but it's a candid one, and it's a true one. The more you think about it, the more you'll believe me; so pray, my dear child, do think it over well."

It was, indeed, a matter to be well thought about; and Eva did think about it. We are not called upon to track her thoughts through all their windings during the remainder of that day. We are only now concerned with the result of them.

That result was embodied in the letter which, for its important influence on the future, we transcribe as it was written:—

"Minchley, 3rd July, 1856.

"MY DEAREST RICHARD,

"What shall I say that will assure you of my real feelings towards you? You almost accuse me—but I do not believe the accusation to come from your heart—of trifling with your affection; as knowing well that, use it as I may, it can never grow cold, or be lost to me. If you could but know how heartily I pray to be guided as to what is my true duty! Dearest Richard, you must surely know that—save a doubt lest I should be doing you a wrong in becoming your wife—there could not be on my own side the shadow of an obstacle in our way. But I have a purpose in this letter, and I wish to keep to it. I sometimes think—I am sensible how foolish and visionary may be the thought—that I shall not always be

in such entire doubt as to my origin as I now am. I have a presentiment that—perhaps through the efforts which your mother is now making—I shall discover to whom I owe my birth, and to whom I rightfully belong. But I have a strong fear upon me that the coming discovery will not be for my advantage nor for my honour. You say your mother encourages you to hope that she is on the eve of a discovery which will remove the inequality between us. Think not, my dearest Richard, that I would question your mother’s good sense, much less her truthfulness of speech; but her hopes and wishes, as she looks forward to our union, may unconsciously bias her understanding. But let me now tell you what I think it is my duty to put before you. *If* any such discovery is made as entitles me to reckon myself at all your equal in birth and station—though of such discovery I feel no very lively hope,—then, if you desire it, I am yours, though against the opposition of the whole world. But it may well be that the secret will never be known, and that I shall live and die unaware how I came into the world. If you can, indeed, be happy with a wife whose origin you may never know, then, in that case, I will give myself to you, in the earnest hope that you will never find your noble, generous confidence to be misplaced. And I ask you to wait a year—you know, dear Richard, I am very young,—a year from this day, before we make up our minds that the secret is to continue a secret. And now, in the remaining alternative, I ask, in return, a promise from *you*. I ask you to promise, if, before the year be over, any discovery be made which decides my birth to be manifestly and entirely beneath your own, in that case, *never to seek, by word or by any other form of address, to induce me to become your wife.* On your giving me this promise, I, in my turn, engage, in case of a favourable discovery, or (after the lapse of a year) in case of no discovery at all, to become to you a loving, and faithful, and happy wife. Do not, dearest Richard, find fault with my decision. I am certain it is the best for both of us—or rather, the only right and just one which it was in my power to make; and do not, I entreat you, seek to alter it. I make it after much deliberation and anxious thought. My dear and generous protector, and your good uncle, always said that a departure from duty, though it many a time promised much happiness, was never known to fulfil that promise in the end; and I can trust that his experience guided him to speak truly. Be our future what it may, I am ever, my dearest Richard, your loving

“EVA.”

This letter was shown by Richard to his mother; not, as you will easily believe, that he intended to take her advice upon it, but that he might convince her of what she seemed so slow to believe in—the lofty integrity and self-denying uprightness of his beloved one’s character.

Mrs. Ferrier could smile very pleasantly. She seldom looked at Richard but with a look which it was pleasant to behold; not thus pleasing, however, was the smile with which she looked at Eva’s letter, and then away from that towards a letter which lay on her desk. That second letter was—to look at it—a long one. It had reached her but that morning, and seemed to have a great interest for her.

It may be a matter of surprise that Richard should not at least have

made an attempt to acquaint himself with the course his mother's discoveries were taking. In truth, he desired to shut out of his mind, in connection with Miss March, all ideas as to her origin, as matters unworthy to be entertained by him. Least of all did he desire his mother to fancy that he cared at all who Miss March might prove to be. It would make Mrs. Ferrier think that his decision might possibly depend on the issue of the inquiries; an idea so contrary to his real intentions it would be grossly untruthful to encourage for one moment; therefore, the progress his mother had made was quite undreamt of by Richard.

She read Eva's letter through, smiled at it in the doubtful manner described, and then gave it back to Richard.

"There! I suppose you take care to keep every scrap she writes to you. Well! so, of course, it is very proper you should. You'll be wanting to know, I imagine, whether I've succeeded in making any discovery. I'm not quite able to say. I think I shall soon have something to lay before you—something satisfactory, I hope—something which will make your marriage with this Miss March a very happy thing for all concerned. I should think you might as well give her the promise she seems to wish for."

"If there is no other alternative I must. But I would not, even after this letter, but that you really give me hopes of a discovery in her favour."

"I do *hope* for such a thing, my dear boy. Not to disappoint you, I would not talk of it as quite a certainty just now; a week or two, I trust, will really make it certain."

"Then, dear mother, as the risk is so small, and as I know it will both satisfy Eva and be of some comfort to you, I will give her the promise she desires; though I shall try and alter one item in the conditions she proposes."

And the post of that day carried out towards Minchley the letter which we copy as it was written:—

"Leamington, 4th July, 1856.

"MY BELOVED, MY OWN EVA,

"You think that I do not know you; and at the same time how ignorant your words prove you to be as to *me*! Can you suppose that I could consider *any* discovery, as to the people who might claim kindred with you, as one that could change *you*? Can you believe that any evil which might happen to you would not increase my devotion to you, and make it a dearer privilege to shelter and protect you than before?

"But now as to the special purpose of your last noble letter. My mother gives me hopes—founded on how secure a basis I am unable, because unwilling, to ascertain—that she is on the point of discovering something which will take away all scruple and hesitation from herself.

"For her own sake, and (you will believe me when I say it) on no other ground, I shall be glad if her wishes are fulfilled. But my expectation is, that though much may be made to appear probable, she will never

succeed in making anything certain; and I am well content that you should live and die having never known any rightful name save that which it may soon be my joy to give you! But you ask me to wait for twelve whole months before we count ourselves safe from any unwelcome discovery. This is surely too much! Let it be six months, and I will endeavour to reconcile myself to the delay. But why say a word about any discovery that might not please us? It would be of no concern to me did it come. Why should it cost us a thought, when, indeed, it never may come?

“I know, my dearest one, that you will endeavour to think kindly of my mother. She would not hesitate if once she knew you. She has been to me the dearest and kindest of mothers; and she will soon learn to bless the day—no distant one, I pray—which made you her daughter.

“Let me hear from you at once.

“Your ever-loving

“RICHARD N. FERRIER.”

On Monday, July 7th, Captain Ferrier, who was still at Leamington, received the following reply:—

“*Minchley, 5th July, 1856.*

“DEAREST RICHARD,

“If you think we are justified in so doing, I will only ask you to wait for *six* months, instead of twelve. But I must entreat you to promise me that if within that time a discovery should take place, which exhibits my birth as decidedly below yours, you will abandon our engagement, and seek for no renewal of it.

“Your loving

“EVA MARCH.”

Eva, on Tuesday, the 8th of July, received as follows:—

“*Leamington, 7th July, 1856.*

“MY DEAREST ONE,

“Most unwillingly indeed, and only reconciled to the act because I am therein obedient to your own earnest wishes, I give you the promise you desire.

“I engage, in case of no discovery being made at all, to wait until this day six months—that is, until the 7th of January, 1857—before I ask you at once to become my wife. Also, in case of any discovery which, in your own words, may exhibit your birth as decidedly ‘below my own,’ *I engage to look upon our love as ended, and never to seek for its renewal, directly or indirectly, by any means whatever.*

“Yours,

“RICHARD N. FERRIER.

“P.S.—I go to my brother’s in Lincolnshire to-morrow (Tuesday), where I shall probably remain about a month. My address will be at ‘Steelby House, Market Ruston (Lincolnshire).’”

Mrs. Ballow, protesting against so many scruples, in a case in which it had been better to follow inclination at once, admitted that these conditions were not very likely to interfere with Eva’s ultimate happiness. So there was no more dispute between them on the subject. Just two

days after the receipt of Richard's last letter—that is, on the 10th of July—Mrs. Ballow unfolded to Eva a scheme which might, at the present crisis, have much to recommend it,—nothing less than a purposed visit to Leamington.

"You see, my dear," she said, "the captain's absence from Leamington takes away all shadow of impropriety from the thing. And aunt Wettiman, who is there now herself, has often wished us to go; and Mr. Ballow thinks he really could get away next week. I should like you to go. You would be sure to meet Mrs. Ferrier somewhere; and the little foolish prejudice she has would soon be done away, I'm sure. Say you'll be ready to go on Monday, there's a good girl. You know this is only Thursday."

"I'll go with you if you wish it, but not on Mrs. Ferrier's account."

So it was settled they should go on the Monday.

We may just remark that at this particular time not one of Mrs. Ballow's children was living at home with her. Alfred and Tom were both away, preparing for their destined professions. The eldest daughter was married and gone to India; the youngest was at a school in Brighton, and the two that came between them were completing their education in a *pensionnat* at Dieppe.

The departure for Leamington was, after all, adjourned from the Monday until the Tuesday. This occurred in consequence of a proposal made on the Saturday by Mr. Ballow himself.

When that gentleman came home to dinner on the day aforesaid, he brought in with him a goodly-sized pamphlet, which proved to be a catalogue of sale.

"Look here, my dear," he said, "this great sale is really to come off. It actually begins on Monday."

"What, at Gravelling Castle? Well, indeed I am sorry. The finest seat in the county to be left like a ruin,—perhaps to be pulled down!"

Gravelling Castle was that magnificent mansion of which mention has been made before, and in which was the portrait so strikingly resembling Eva. That likeness, so observable five years ago, would no doubt be still closer at the present time; for the apparent age of the young lady in the picture was just the age at which Eva must now have arrived. So Mr. and Mrs. Ballow settled between themselves, when Eva was out of the room, that they would attend the sale on Monday. It might be their last opportunity of beholding the mysterious picture. And apart from that, the sale would be a sight worth seeing. So on Monday morning they went together, leaving Miss March at home.

Gravelling Castle, notwithstanding its name, had nothing about it which recalled the feudal ages. Its oldest portion had been built by the first Earl of Horticult. That was the celebrated Sir Adam Gardener, of George II.'s reign, to whose love of travel and discriminating appetite

we owe more than one description of mushroom sauce. Over and above that great invention, he turned his castle into a princely dwelling of the Palladian style. And now his latest successor (he was the Lord Fitzadam, who represented his county so many years),—his latest successor had reached the ruin towards which, for three generations, the house of Horticult had been steadily advancing.

It was hard to associate that sheltering avenue, that stately park, those delicious gardens, those priceless mosaics, those pictures (proclaiming each its painter), with such a vulgar word as ruin. But ruin was there. Ruin had brought in the multitude of people who began to frequent the castle on that 14th of July. It brought in, amongst other persons and things, the fly which held good Mr. and Mrs. Ballow.

They wandered about through the splendid rooms—splendid in their very abandonment and disorder. There was much in them to fascinate the eye. There were pictures, any one of which was food to any eye for a week. There were portraits epitomizing the history of an age. For instance, a portrait of Louis XVIII., presented, shortly after his restoration, by that king himself. This went for a very large amount. And so it surely should have done; for of all the things which had ruined the house of Gardener no single expense had done so much as their unstinted hospitality to the exiled Bourbons in the early years of the present century.

Mr. and Mrs. Ballow, before they paid much attention to other objects, looked out for that portrait which Eva so wonderfully resembled. They found it before very long. Nor were they disappointed in its looks.

"Just as I said," remarked Mrs. Ballow; "more like than ever now!"

"Yes, certainly," said her husband. "Eva has caught it up, to be sure. She is as like it now as ever she will be. Every day will help (as it passes over her) to efface the likeness, until she becomes an old, grey, wrinkled woman, while this picture abides in all the bloom of its beauty. It is a strange thought, my love, that the works of man are often so far more lasting than man is himself."

The portrait, simply described as the "Portrait of a Lady," did not appear to be much regarded by any other of the beholders. There was likely to be no very keen competition for its purchase. It was not numbered among the pictures for which Gravelling Castle had been celebrated through Europe. It was by a nameless artist, and of a person quite unknown to fame. People stopped a little to admire the beauty of the countenance, and then at once passed on. Its reserved price was ten guineas. Mr. and Mrs. Ballow had some discussion whether they should not endeavour to secure it. Very probably there would be none to bid against them. Before they could decide what they should do, a third person, utterly unknown to them, had come up to where they stood, and was looking at the picture with an interest equalling their own.

He was a rather tall man, and, to judge from his dress, a clergyman. His figure was upright and slender; his complexion very dark; moreover, his hair was grizzled, and his features somewhat sunken. His age there was no means of reckoning from his appearance. He might be a care-worn man of thirty, or he might be a somewhat youthful-looking man for sixty.

He stood looking very intently at the portrait for a few minutes, the Ballows being a little behind him. Then the stranger turned to an auctioneer, or auctioneer's agent, who stood near to him, and expressed his desire of obtaining that picture of the young lady. His words were, "I should like to have that picture of Miss Somerby. At what is it fixed?"

The Ballows wondered. He certainly knew the name of the original. (It will be remembered that they had learned as much themselves in their previous visit to the castle.) How much more was it possible that he knew?

The man whom he questioned told him the set price, and also announced that he should presently expose it for sale.

The stranger stood still, awaiting the man's leisure; and our friends heard him say—for he seemed unconscious that any one was near him,—“I will have this at any reasonable price. I know of one whom it will comfort, comfort greatly, to see it again. I will have it.”

Mr. and Mrs. Ballow tacitly abandoned all idea of competing with him. And presently the picture he desired was put up for sale. The proceeding proved as formal as when congregations are asked to forbid somebody's banns. At ten guineas it was going. At ten guineas it was—going. At ten guineas it was—gone.

The purchaser of it, evidently much delighted with his achievement, took out his card-case, and read to the auctioneer the address imprinted on it.

“Look here. This is where I wish it sent. To the ‘Reverend John Dykhart, Croxton Vicarage, near Cambridge.’”

The agent received his card, and promised accordingly.

The clergyman had turned away, with the apparent intention of leaving the room, when he suddenly turned round, and recalled the person to whom he had handed his card.

“I have just considered,” he said, “that it will be better for me to have the picture sent to me in London.” He took back the card, and wrote something in pencil on the reverse of it.

“This is where you can forward it,” he said, as he restored the card into the man's hand,—“Reverend John Dykhart, Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross, London.” And in a moment more he had walked away.

When Mr. and Mrs. Ballow got home that evening, they sent to borrow a Clergy List for the year 1856, from the rector of their own parish. It was promptly lent them, and they looked out in it for the parish of

Croxton, in Cambridgeshire, and for its vicar, the Rev. John Dykhart. Croxton they quickly found; but its vicar was enrolled by no such name as Dykhart. His name was “Jonathan Poakham,” and he had held his living since the year 1815. Was it for *his* sake that the picture had been bought? This was a matter not to be at once resolved.

But the name and place were things to be carefully recorded, as possible aids towards unravelling the mystery of Miss March’s birth.

On the following day they all three went off to Leamington. Aunt Wettiman had obtained for them very satisfactory lodgings, in close proximity to her own. She was somewhat intimate with a lady who also reckoned Mrs. Ferrier amongst her intimates. It was, therefore, not so surprising that the Ballow party, on returning from Warwick Castle on the Wednesday, found Mrs. Ferrier’s card on the table, side by side with that of their mutual friend.

There was also a third rectangular patch of white lying side by side with the two cards; and that proved to be a note addressed to Mrs. Ballow, by Mrs. Ferrier. It invited our three friends, with all the urgency of polite hospitality, to take tea with Mrs. Ferrier on the following evening.

“There, Miss Eva!” said Mr. Ballow, having read the note after his wife, and handing it to Eva in her turn. “Now what do you think of that? Really we are getting on.”

“I think we shall soon have January here,” Mrs. Ballow said, of course alluding to the six months’ delay on which Eva had chosen to insist.

“I’m sure,” said our heroine, “I would a great deal sooner not go. Can you not leave me at home?”

“No, no, my dear. Accept the invitation by all means. You must not put yourself in the wrong with Mrs. Ferrier. You must not appear to rebuff her when she really does make advances to you.”

And to Mrs. Ferrier’s (for Eva felt the force of this argument) they bent their steps at the appointed time. It was Thursday, the 17th of July, and six o’clock in the evening.

They were not the first persons on whose account Mrs. Ferrier’s door had on that very day been opened. Some time in the early afternoon, when Mrs. Ferrier was giving out her best china for the evening’s tea, she had been interrupted by no less a person than the captain himself. In a letter that morning received by her he had told her that impending sickness in his brother’s youthful family might possibly necessitate the cutting short of his visit in Lincolnshire. He now told her, by word of mouth, that the measles had, beyond a doubt, made invalids of all her three grandchildren; and that he was now again for some time a sojourner at Leamington. Gladness at having him somewhat sobered by the household troubles of her elder son, put out for a moment the great anxiety of all from her heart. But it very quickly overpowered her again. She did not countermand the evening’s party, nor take means to acquaint

Miss March with Richard's arrival. Events, she believed, were playing into her hands.

"It had better go on," she thought within herself. "It is better that all should happen when he was present. He will feel it, I know; he will feel it deeply. But it is infinitely the lesser evil of the two." And then Mrs. Ferrier examined a certain page in a railway guide, which for the last few days had been seldom out of her reach.

The party was not a large one. And besides the members of it whom you know already, I do not believe you need care to be introduced to any one. Some surprise, and, in one especial quarter, some embarrassment, was caused by the unexpected meeting with Richard. How it happened was quickly explained by the captain himself.

"Such infatuated folly!" his mother was saying to herself all the while. "I do believe he would be thankful to see all his relations, and myself amongst the number, all die of the measles together, if it would but give him an excuse for an hour's dallying with that fat girl."

We have said that if Eva's figure erred it was not on the side of leanness. And you might trust Mrs. Ferrier's eye to fix at once on all poor Eva's blemishes. If Miss March had been modelled after the purest type of beauty that a Grecian sculptor ever imagined, Richard's mother would only have dreaded and detested her the more.

"She is just a vulgar beauty," were her actual thoughts when Eva came into the room. "A fat bold face, looking very much as if it were painted. At least I should have given the boy credit for having more taste. And she does not look at all ashamed of herself; no, not in the least."

All this while Mrs. Ferrier was receiving and introducing, with every outward show of courtesy, the detachment of her guests which included Miss March. Though, assuredly, that young lady neither looked nor felt in any degree ashamed of herself, nobody at all unprejudiced would have ever pronounced her vulgar. All the company, not knowing beforehand the situation of things, were very much struck and attracted by her. The captain's behaviour very soon proclaimed that he and the young lady were as far as possible from strangers.

After some desultory conversation Richard happened to mention his having announced his sudden return to Leamington in a letter of that morning to his mother. "My mother," he said, "did not make sure of seeing me until I actually arrived."

Mrs. Ferrier, who was now engaged with the tea-table, interposed a remark of her own.

"Because, my dear Richard, I did not understand you positively to say you would come. I know you always do what you say for certain you will.—Yes, Miss March, you have no idea (*when he promises a thing*) how determined he is in keeping his promise."

And the lady glanced at a side-table on which, half buried by other

things, lay the railway guide before mentioned. It surely had some comfort to give her, for she turned back with a much more satisfied expression to the cups and saucers before her.

The tea went on as satisfactorily as might be wished. Richard, to be sure, was not quite general enough in his attentions to the ladies; and Mrs. Ferrier looked furtively at her watch more than once. Otherwise no guest could possibly complain. When tea was over, none but the younger members of the party were disposed to saunter in the garden. For the weather, taking into account the time of year, was not by any means warm that evening. This Mrs. Ferrier felt to be a most unlucky dispensation. She would have had it genial enough for all to take to the garden; or else too inclement for any of them. She was very anxious that for an hour or so Richard should be securely under her eye. When he joined the junior portion of the company upon the lawn she was devoured with anxiety. Of course, she would have followed them had the thermometer been standing at zero. But a due courtesy to the elderly persons who remained indoors restrained her from doing so. Certain persons were to arrive at Leamington that evening, whose coming she trusted would give to her terrors a perpetual quietus. But their arrival would not take place just yet. They might be delayed even beyond the proper time; they might be hindered altogether. Railway carriages are but boards (even so are the directors), and engine-drivers are but men.

Irreparable mischief might be done while Richard and Eva, unwatched by her, were moving about the garden. To be sure, there was Richard's promise to delay decisive action for six months. Mrs. Ferrier was glad to have secured it; for any additional hindrance in the way of so mad a marriage was a thing exceedingly welcome to her. But she had very little faith in her son's resolution. Much less was she disposed to trust Eva. She believed Miss March to be thoroughly capable of saying, "Come, dearest Richard, you cannot suppose I would wish you really to keep that ridiculous promise!" She was very likely at this very moment leading him on to say something which, let come what would, it would be difficult ever to retract. Mrs. Ferrier, although bodily seated on the softest of sofa-cushions, was morally upon thistles and thorns. She cast an anxious look at the window, then again consulted her watch, and seemed a little comforted.

The company, altogether unaware of the tragi-comic drama preparing, only thought Mrs. Ferrier a little uneasy and pre-occupied; a matter not to be seriously regarded. Their hostess plunged into the commonplace conversation going on, once or twice expressing her hope that the young people would take no cold.

The talk between Richard and Eva, could Mrs. Ferrier have heard it, would not, perhaps, have greatly reassured her.

The lovers walked apart from the other young people (there were

about four or five of them), who had quitted the drawing-room for the garden. They stopped before a bed of sweet-williams, now just in their fullest bloom. The first to speak was Richard.

"Well, Eva, six months; and not one-half of the first of them gone yet. Every flower in this garden—every summer and autumn flower—must blossom and die, and winter must pass over all, before we can hope for happiness. Surely we have been very wrong."

"No, dear Richard. Believe me, I feel every hour more persuaded that we are doing right. There is your mother, you know. Perhaps, before the time is come, she will be a little less averse to receive me. Oh, I hope she may! Do not suppose, dear Richard, that I do repent, or ever could repent, of our engagement. But I hope, I trust, I may not be the means of estranging you from her."

"No, dearest one. Long before that—as I hope you will now see her frequently—you will be just as dear to her as I am. It was a good idea, your coming to Leamington. Only think as kindly of my mother's prejudices, while they continue, as you can."

"To be sure, dear Richard. She would be very unlike a mother did she not expect much greater things for you. And my whole life shall be devoted to showing her that, at least, I *wish* to be worthy of her. Have you, since you came back to-day, heard her mention anything about—the discovery?"

"No, not a word, my sweet one. I have no doubt it was what I expected from the first; some person has played her a trick, extorted money on promise of information. You can well understand that she does not like to talk about it."

At this moment they were joined by one or two other members of the party. So for some time, perhaps for half an hour, they continued in company with them, and had no more private conversation. But by-and-bye they somewhat fell apart again, and began talking as before, and in the same spot of the garden.

"I was going to say, Eva dearest," Richard began,—“I was going to say, when we were talking here a little while ago, that I believe my mother is now tired of worrying herself about any discovery. She must be satisfied now that it is, at all events, beyond *her* penetration. It was as well to let her alone while she was trying it. The occupation given her would be rather a comfort to her than otherwise. Let us agree to put the whole matter aside once and for ever.”

"Yes, dearest Richard; you know it will be a pleasure to *me* to put the thing away. But it is not I who have any right to do so. But it must be all the same as to your promise."

"Yes, it must; I know it must. Well, may the six months be the shortest, as they will surely be the unhappiest, of both our lives!"

"They need not be unhappy, dear Richard. We shall each have a purpose to occupy us during that time. Yours, to take all fear and

doubt from your mother's mind; mine, to help you as I can, and in every way to make myself less unfit to be your wife. Oh, Richard, look at those people coming up to us! Who can they possibly be?"

The intruders (angels would have been regarded as intruders then and there) comprised a gentleman and a lady. The gentleman was, if anything, rather the shorter of the two. He was dressed in black; and, though his look and manner did not betoken much refinement, was by no means repulsive in appearance. Scarcely as much could be said in the lady's favour. There was a tossing, swaggering air about her, which indicated, "Quarrels got up on the shortest notice." So much could be observed in her while she was yet at some little distance.

Mrs. Ferrier was conducting these two persons, who had not come through the drawing-room, but round from the front of the house. As they came nearer and nearer, the lady's face came full in Eva's sight. It reminded her of a face which she had twice in her life beheld before. It was a very cross face,—like *that* face. It was a very red face,—also like *that* face. Its owner was a little in advance of the gentleman, her companion, and just abreast with Mrs. Ferrier. The latter lady came up and explained.

"Miss March, here are a lady and a gentleman exceedingly anxious to see you; and I believe they have something to tell you which you will be very much interested to hear."

Mrs. Ferrier spoke and felt with marked malevolence. But then, you see, she had caught Richard and Eva together, and alone. She did not know what might have passed between them; nor whether she had not come too late with her reinforcements even now.

Eva, the very opposite of a timid girl at most times, could never suppress a thrill of her nerves whenever crossed by so much as a remembrance of that horrible red face. And now, in its actual presence, she felt coming over her a horror that made her stagger where she stood. Richard's succour was afforded in a way that did not appease the angry alarm of his mother.

"Perhaps, Mrs. Dowlas," said she, "you will be so kind as to speak for yourself."

Mrs. Dowlas was never backward at speaking for herself, and she took the invitation most literally now.

"Now, then, Miss What-am-I-to-call-you! I've come ever so many miles, and all on your account. Haven't you got a civil word to say to me?"

This woman's voice and tone were such as always insured her an audience. Her greeting to Miss March arrested every ear in that garden, penetrated through the closed windows into the drawing-room, and awoke curiosity in even the premises adjoining.

Eva was frightened—appalled. That face and that voice had the magic to blot out fourteen years. For a moment all her youth and growth were as if they had never been, and she was again a child—

again a desolate child—cast out into London streets, like a toy-ship launched on the waves of the Atlantic.

"I beg your pardon," she said to Mrs. Dowlas, "but I don't know you. Who are you?"

"Who am I?" returned the lady, with just the same voice as before. "Who am I? Why, I'm your own aunt! and you're too proud to speak to me, I see. But I rather think it's I that might be too proud."

Here the short gentleman in black, who had been hitherto silent, interposed a remonstrance.

"My dear," he said, "I think this is hardly the place——"

"This is not the place, you great lout! when it's just you that have dragged me here—when it's you that said it was our duty to come! Hold your tongue, you jack-in-the-box, and let me manage the thing in a proper manner!"

By this time the drawing-room had discharged on to the lawn its wondering and listening detachment. So the Ballows were now on the scene. Mr. Ballow had no hesitation in recalling to his thoughts the face and voice which were still so fresh in his memory. And the owner of them was quick in recollecting him.

"My gracious me! why, here's Paul Pry again! You little stunted creature, you thought you had done the thing very cleverly in getting so much out of me as you did! But you're welcome to know all you like now; and you're going, perhaps, to know *more* than you'll like! I told you before you'd be very likely to get the worst of it! and now you have got the worst of it. At all events, young Miss is likely to have the worst of it!"

The gentleman—whom everybody, of course, knows to be Mr. Dowlas—now came and addressed himself to Eva.

"Miss March," he said, "I am sorry—very sorry—that it should have happened in this way. In fact, my wife is—not quite in her usual health,—is a little fatigued and agitated by her journey. Can we retire, and have this matter explained more privately? Perhaps Mrs. Ferrier would allow us to step into the house."

"Thank you, Mrs. Ferrier," said Mr. Ballow, anticipating that lady's consent. "But I rather think that we will not trouble you. Miss March shall come home at once with Mrs. Ballow and myself. You will, I have no doubt, excuse our going away so abruptly."

Mr. Ballow did not care if Mrs. Ferrier detected his real feelings in the sarcasm of his tone. That she had mischievously contrived the scene, with a view of bringing the utmost humiliation on Eva, would have been evident to the most stupid person in the world.

Mrs. Dowlas had made herself cough with the energy of her language, and she was just now disposed to silence; so she offered no protest against the plan of action proposed by Eva's friend. Thus the five

persons, taking some sort of leave of Mrs. Ferrier, began to move towards the house. Richard was loth to let Eva go.

“Eva dearest! remember *I* am the same to you, befall what will.”

“Oh, Richard—oh, Captain Ferrier! indeed, indeed, you must try and forget me.”

“But, Eva, stay! At least you promise me that you will let me see you to-morrow? Nay, I will not—shall not—let you go away without *that* promise at least.”

“Well—yes—I will. Only, if I remember *my* promise, you also must remember yours.”

And she tore herself away, and was gone.

Mrs. Ferrier was on the lawn still, talking to her guests that remained. Richard came up to her and drew her away.

“Oh, mother, how had you the heart to do so? How could you assist in bringing this cruel blow upon her,—and upon me too?”

“My dear Richard! have you really lost your senses, beyond all hope of finding them? *I* bring this upon her! How could I have made her friends other than they are?”

“But, mother, do remember that you encouraged us to expect a very different sort of discovery.”

“Goodness me, boy! what could I suppose, when I was told that her aunt’s husband was a clergyman; and so he *is* a clergyman—a real clergyman. You’re angry, Richard, and you’d make your mother the scapegoat for your anger. Let me tell you, it is not what I deserve from you. Perhaps you will one day acknowledge as much yourself.”

And Mrs. Ferrier walked proudly away from him. She had thrown her last stake; and if she did not now prevail, she could never hope to succeed at all. To violate one’s conscience for nothing is terrible. And this lady was frantic to think that, having done so much of which her heart could not thoroughly approve, she might have done all in vain.

“But I have done no more than my duty,—no more than my strict duty,” she said again and again to herself. “A few months more, and he himself will be the first to say so.”

Mr. and Mrs. Ballow, Miss March, and Mr. and Mrs. Dowlas walked away from the house towards the lodgings occupied by the three former. Mr. Dowlas was anxious to explain a few matters, and, fortunately enough, it was not the present whim of his wife to prevent him.

“I had no idea,” Mr. Dowlas accordingly began to Mr. Ballow—“I had no idea that the matter would come upon you in this really sudden and somewhat public manner. I very much regret it, I assure you. I think it is scarcely my fault. I thought Miss March would be fully prepared for my arrival, and also for the reason of our coming. Was not that really the case?”

“No, indeed, sir. We had not the faintest intimation of your coming, or you would scarcely have found us as you did.”

"Astonishing! Astounding!" replied the clergyman, with something of Welsh irritability in his manner. "Some days ago—a full fortnight ago—I sent Mrs. Ferrier a full account of all the circumstances which justified our coming. And the day, and everything else, was arranged since then. In fact, it was at Mrs. Ferrier's particular desire that we put it off until to-day. We *had* settled with her to come on Monday."

"Mrs. Ferrier," Mr. Ballow replied, "has acted in a manner of which, as she is, or ought to be, a lady, I would rather not speak any more."

"I was surprised to hear from her just now," resumed Mr. Dowlas, "that she had not prepared you or Miss March for this. At my particular request she has put into my hands a letter I wrote her about a fortnight ago. It contains all the particulars—all that I could ever learn—of this very strange and important matter that brings me here to-day. Do you think Miss March would like to read it as I have written it?"

Miss March spoke up for herself. They were now on their way home, and in the quiet streets, now rapidly growing dark.

"Yes," Eva said. "Pray do so; pray let me have it."

"Might it be better if I were to show it to your friends here first?"

"No; I beseech you let me read it all myself. I know, in their anxiety to save me any sorrow, they would soften many things in it which it would be far better I should learn the worst of at once."

"I suppose, by 'the worst' of it all you just mean *me*, Miss. Well, thank you very much for your polite compliment."

"My dear, I hope you won't fatigue yourself." And with this tender remonstrance yet in his mouth, Mr. Dowlas, along with the others, arrived at the hotel in which he had secured a room for the night. The Ballows and Eva had a little further to go.

Mr. Dowlas put into our heroine's hand the letter of which he had spoken. Then, arranging to call the next day to ascertain the course which Eva would wish to take, he, together with his spouse, left them all three to proceed on their way. Their lodgings were soon reached, and Eva, without saying a word, betook herself to her own room, and then they heard her lock herself in.

"I'll not disturb her now," said Mrs. Ballow. "Poor girl! Her feelings are fearfully excited, I can see. I'll go to her by-and-bye," which Mr. Ballow agreed would be the better course.

Eva, after she had fastened her door, set down on a table the lighted candle she had carried in with her, sat herself down on a chair close by, and took out the paper given into her hands by Mr. Dowlas. That the news contained in it would be painful and shocking to her, that it would oblige her, as she valued her own and Richard's faith, to surrender every hope of happiness,—all this was clear to her already. Why should she

want the courage to read it? All (she felt) was over—over already. Nor could this letter tell her anything worse than, without it, she knew.

Yet she was very loth to begin it. She held it folded in her hands for one or two minutes. Then, ashamed of such childish trifling, she resolutely grasped and opened it, determined never to withdraw her eyes from it until the whole had been read by her.

It was, as may be imagined, much longer than any ordinary letter, but it was written in an epistolary form, and addressed to Mrs. Ferrier. These were its contents :—

*"Llynbullyn, near Carnarvon,
"3rd July, 1856.*

"MADAM,

"With the deepest feelings of interest, and fresh from the astonishment with which recent tidings have affected me, I endeavour as best I may to give you a plain narrative of certain facts. Any defect in the manner of my recording it will, I trust, be leniently regarded.

"I take up my pen with the sanction—nay, at the very earnest desire—of my sister-in-law, *Mrs. Roberts*, whose home for many years has been with myself and my wife. The agitation displayed by her when her eyes fell on the advertisement addressed to her by name has left her in a very nervous and dangerous state. She has, however, entrusted to me the task of acting for her, and, as a necessary step, has confided to me the extraordinary facts concerning her child. Aware, from several sources of information, that her life had been much chequered by sorrow and disappointment; aware, from long observing her demeanour, that beyond the troubles which were known to myself some secret grief was gnawing at her heart,—fully aware of all this, I never knew, until within the last few days, that the child born in such fearful misery had so much as survived its birth. I trust that so much evil may be found to issue in some good. But I am forgetting the duty I owe to yourself, madam, to my sister-in-law, and also to the cause of truth and justice. That duty, now before me, is to give to you, who have so much right to require it, a complete account of all the circumstances (as far as they are known to me) which have issued in this most unparalleled position just now occupied by us.

"You express a wish, madam, that my story should be as minute and full as I can make it. Such being your desire, you will, I trust, ascribe the length at which I am going to write to no unworthy motive. I accordingly begin with the very earliest events in the melancholy story now to be told by me.

"Mrs. Roberts was the younger, as my wife was the elder, daughter of Mr. David Roberts, who for very many years kept a respectable tavern in Liverpool. There is and has been for some years in Liverpool a church for the Welsh inhabitants of that immense city. It was my lot, about twenty years ago, to assist as curate in that church, and I was soon made intimate with Mr. Roberts, who, like myself, was a native of Wales. I could not help noticing—none could have helped it—the striking contrast between Jane, his elder daughter (now for many years past my wife), and Susanna, the younger, known to you in a measure as Mrs. Roberts. Jane possessed—indeed, she possesses it still—great energy of will, and an exuberant sprightliness in conversation. Susanna's timid spirit put her at very great disadvantage, both at home and abroad. She had just that

disposition which leads a person, from a distracted anxiety to do right, to do many things altogether wrong. She was likely to become very helpless in the hands of any artful and ill-meaning man. I grieve to say that such a man at one time crossed her path. I also blush to say that he came wearing the mask of religion.

"The man to whom I allude was an Irishman. His name was Bryan O'Cullamore. He was a member of the Orange Society, and the advancement of its principles appeared to be his only definite occupation in Liverpool. He acquired much popularity by his vigorous exposure of the errors and corruptions of Popery, delivered, from time to time, at public meetings, and, moreover, kept up in the weekly newspaper of which he acted as editor. He found favour and patronage from several influential persons; amongst others from the late King of Hanover, then (with the single exception of our present Queen) the next in succession to the throne. I mention this to show you that when first my poor sister-in-law gave an attentive ear to the proposals of Mr. O'Cullamore, she had no reason for imagining that she was entering on an engagement at all unadvised or degrading. You will not care, madam, to hear the details of a man's deceit and a woman's foolishness. Poor Susanna was ready to believe anything told her by the man whom so many people in Liverpool regarded as a champion for the truth, raised up by God himself. Though I was willing to do justice to his zeal against error, I always felt him to be deficient in that charity which should ever accompany our extremest hatred of what is false. And subsequent events proved Mr. O'Cullamore to be an utter stranger to all which deserves truly to be called religion.

"Instead of openly asking Susanna to marry him with her father's sanction and in her father's presence, he persuaded her (giving reasons for it which ought to have stirred her suspicions at once) to follow him to London, and be united with him there. And this, poor foolish woman! she actually did. Her father was angry, not nearly so much at the marriage itself as at the deceitful and disgraceful manner in which it had been entered upon. And very quickly Mr. O'Cullamore's motives for quitting Liverpool thus hastily and secretly were fully apparent. He had involved himself in debts which he could by no artifices any longer keep out of sight. I fear I do him no injustice in saying that he would not have cared to discharge them had the means of doing so been given him. He certainly made no such use of the few hundreds which he at once acquired in right of my sister-in-law. She had something independently of her father. She was moreover of age by two or three years, so that her father could not have hindered her marriage, had it been all transacted under his own eyes. The marriage took place in London (in the church of St. Mary, Strand), in March, 1837. The certificate was forwarded, in order to set at rest some dreadful doubts which had arisen in the mind of my father-in-law; and after the first month of her married life Susanna seemed quite to have turned her back on her home and family. For months and months not so much as a line from her or from her husband reached her father or her sister. They were very angry with her. They little thought how deeply, all the while, her most wretched state was to be pitied. But much worse was still to come. One day, in the early autumn of 1837, a letter actually reached my present wife (then Miss Roberts) from her unhappy sister. It told a dreadful tale of deceit and cruelty. For some reason—to be only too well explained by-and-by—

her husband had savagely forbidden her to communicate with her family; and, awed by his authority and alarmed at his threats, she had for many months abstained from doing so. But now the cruel embarrassment in which she stood overcame even the fear of her husband's finding her out. She was almost destitute. The money which her husband had acquired by his marriage with her he had engrossed to himself, and, whether he had spent or saved it, she was devoid of some of the common comforts of life. Nominally he lived with her still; but she never knew when or for how long he might be absent from home; and she added many more painful complaints of his unkindness and neglect. She also said that six months more would most probably bring her a great addition to her cares, and she ended by throwing herself on the forgiveness of her father, whom she acknowledged she had wrongfully disobeyed and deceived.

“I regret to have to say that poor Susanna's piteous appeal did not meet with the response that would have been most worthy of a parent. A very small sum of money was sent to her; and Mr. Roberts was more inclined to punish the man who had deceived, than to succour and comfort his poor daughter, who had thus been made a dupe. But he was presently to find that a greater wrong had been done than had ever been imagined by him. He made some inquiries as the life and conduct of Mr. O'Cullamore previously to his coming to Liverpool. By certain steps, which I need not trace one by one, he became acquainted with the horrible fact that Mr. O'Cullamore had a wife still living in Ireland; that therefore his marriage with Miss Roberts in London had been a pretence and a crime. Resentment overpowered sense of shame, acute as it was, in my father-in-law, and he put the law in motion at once. The wretched man was arrested in the lodgings in which (as poor Susanna's last letter informed us) he spent at least a part of his life. At the printing-office of the *Protestant Guard* he was known under another name, and might therefore have considered himself safe from pursuit. Why should I dwell on the details of a most wretched story? O'Cullamore was tried for bigamy, and sentenced to transportation for seven years. It is my painful duty to say that Mr. Roberts treated his wretched daughter in a manner which was utterly unmerciful, and not a little unjust. He chose to believe that she had been much more the accomplice than the dupe of her seducer; for, as regarded his intentions, he fully merited that detestable title. And Mr. Roberts was even cruel enough to think that she had known O'Cullamore's real position from the very beginning. I am sure he was wrong, and I earnestly but fruitlessly remonstrated with him at the time. He sternly refused to open his doors to his daughter—now in a condition infinitely worse than widowhood. Nor would he afford her any but the scantiest assistance in money. Miss Roberts (as perhaps it was her duty to do) shared in the sentiments and will of her father. I myself was living on but a small salary at that time, and I was awaiting such preferment in Wales as might justify me in completing my engagement with Miss Roberts.

“If, madam, you feel bound to blame my afflicted sister-in-law for what I am about to tell, may I not venture to say that the crushing weight of misery then upon her should also be duly considered? From the landlady of her lodgings my poor forsaken sister-in-law found very much kindness. And it was at her instance that, when the expected time of trouble drew near, she craved to be admitted into an asylum devoted to persons in her condition. She had discarded the name of O'Cullamore,

to which she had never possessed any real right, and which was now known as the name of an atrocious hypocrite and criminal, and she spoke of herself, in the lodgings near Euston Square, to which she removed about Christmas (1837), as 'Mrs. Roberts.' Of her husband she spoke as having deserted her. And if her landlady knew or suspected any more, she had the delicacy to act and speak as if in ignorance of it. But charity itself seemed to have turned its back upon this unhappy young woman—so much more sinned against than sinning. The hospital was for married women. She was but the victim of a villain. Representations of the real case were made to the managers of the institution. But against all which could be pleaded for poor Susanna there was this serious fact, that her own father—a thriving and respectable man—had shut his doors against her. Hitherto I have written of what, in a great measure, occurred in my own knowledge. I now come to matters which I have almost entirely gathered from poor Mrs. Roberts herself.

"One very cold day in the month of February, 1838, she walked down—so she tells me—to the hospital, which would, she still trusted, admit her within its walls. She was sent away with a refusal—a refusal not unkind in tone, but so decisive as to shut out all prospect of the boon being granted her. The managers were sorry. They were not disposed to doubt that she was morally blameless. However, they had a rule as to those whom they made partakers of their bounty. To relax that rule in one exceptional case would make it very difficult thenceforth to keep it with any due strictness. And anything which tended to afford the charity indiscriminately to vice and virtue would open the door to evils of the gravest kind. Such, in substance, was the decision of the managers of the house, delivered to poor Mrs. Roberts by the matron of the institution. She found seated in the same room a very decent-looking woman, who seemed greatly interested in her pitiful case, but who offered no intercession on her behalf, nor so much as said a word to her. My unhappy sister-in-law felt that now indeed her last refuge was gone. To what desperate act, poor afflicted creature! she might next have resorted, can never be known to any. She had quitted the building, and was beginning her painful walk homewards, when, before she got many yards, she was accosted by that woman of whom I have just spoken.

"The woman said, 'I'm sorry they won't let you in. What are you going to do?' Poor Susanna said she did not know; she had no resource left her in the world, and should only be too glad to die. The woman said, 'Don't fret yourself; I know of a good gentleman who will get you assistance. He employs me to go about and find poor women who require help as you do. Show me where you live, and I'll promise you, you shall feel very thankful that these folks would *not* take you in.' In such extremity, who would have turned away from friendship proffered in this manner? The woman went home with Susanna; promised that she herself would attend her in the approaching time of trouble; and, moreover, provided a few things most serviceable at such a time. A day or two after she came again, and said that Mrs. Roberts might certainly calculate on the favour of her new nurse's charitable employer. That nurse announced herself as a *Mrs. Beakham*; but of the name or condition of the unknown benefactor for whom she was acting she never said one word.

"One day she asked poor Mrs. Roberts what, when her coming trial was safely over, she expected to do with herself. How did she expect,

burdened with an infant child, to obtain any manner of livelihood? Susanna had felt so deeply the extraordinary deliverance from her immediate distress, that the troubles of the more distant future had little disturbed her. But now, suggested by the language of her nurse, the sickening truth flashed across her, that the safe recovery which might be in store for her would only carry her to meet new difficulties, new miseries.

"Mrs. Beakham set her future situation before her as darkly as it could be painted. In truth, it required no very sombre imagination to view it as a most hopeless one. And then the woman assured her that she might escape the destitution otherwise in store for her; might secure a comfortable, nay, a lofty position for her child, and might gain a fresh start in life for herself, if she would but consent to one act of sacrifice. Would she, in a word, give up her child to be reared by a rich lady and gentleman, who wanted to adopt a child from its very birth? Not all at once, but without any very great difficulty, she persuaded my sister-in-law, in her desperate situation, to consent to the sacrifice. Every precaution was adopted. The nurse took up her abode in the house. The landlady, who was nervous in times of illness, went out to pay a visit in the country. Mrs. Beakham had dropped a hint that the case would involve an unusual amount of suffering and danger.

"Very early in the morning of Wednesday, the 7th of March, 1838, Susanna gave birth to a daughter. In the course of the morning she was visited by a medical man. She can only remember that he was rather young, that he was very attentive, and that Mrs. Beakham spoke of him as 'Mr. Smith.' Some time in the afternoon the nurse told Susanna that it must be given out that her child was born dead; that she had provided a dead child to substitute for the baby she was to convey that night to its destined home. She was now, she said, about to consult with 'Mr. Smith' as to the exact time and manner of completing the arrangements. She went out, leaving Susanna in the care of a very deaf old woman, to whom (had she been inclined) she could scarcely have betrayed the affair now pending.

"Mrs. Beakham, for very obvious reasons, kept her patient quiet by repeated soporific draughts. She knew the nature with which she had to deal; and she was aware that the scruples, hitherto effectually kept at bay, might interfere at the last and most critical moment. Mrs. Roberts was not all the while so stupefied as to be quite unconscious of what was passing before her. She saw Mrs. Beakham come into the room about eight in the evening; take from out of her dress a pocket, and hang it on a chair near the bed. Susanna, during a few minutes that evening, was left alone. She found strength enough to gratify the curiosity which possessed her. She had a strong craving to find out the name and position of Mrs. Beakham's unknown employers. In the pocket, which she contrived to clutch with her hand, she found a handkerchief and a large key. There was not a scrap of paper to give any such clue as she desired. Between ten and eleven Mrs. Beakham told her that she was now going to place the child in the hands of its adoptive parents. She said all she could to soothe her patient, and once more put to her lips the draught which was to lull her into stupor. Mrs. Roberts took the glass in her hand; begged Mrs. Beakham to let her have one last look at the baby, who lay in an adjoining room; and, while the nurse went out to comply with her request, poured the draught at once upon the carpet behind the bed. Mrs. Beakham again put on the pocket I have mentioned, took up

the child, and went away. Poor Susanna—the deed beyond recall, and her senses no longer drugged—began to feel bitterly repentant for what she had done. She had bartered away a mother's joys before she had known one-half of their value. She could not undo the deed now; but she might, possibly, leave open a chance of undoing it at some future day. She might, perhaps, outwit Mrs. Beakham, and gain some knowledge of the persons to whom her child was to be committed.

"When Mrs. Beakham returned home, which was at about two in the morning, her patient feigned to be fast asleep. The nurse, who slept in the same room, was not long in dozing off herself. Then my sister-in-law again searched the pocket, which was hung, as before, on the chair. There was no key in it. The handkerchief was there, as before; and attached to it, as by some adhesive substance, was a small-sized letter. It was written on very thin paper; and, though folded, was not fastened up. Mrs. Roberts concealed it beneath her pillow, and determined to take the first occasion of examining it. She could not help thinking that accident, and not design, had placed it where she found it. Of a certainty Mrs. Beakham never, by so much as a look, intimated that she had missed it. My poor sister recovered; and, upon the whole, rather rapidly. Mrs. Beakham handed over to her the sum for which she had stipulated to part with her baby. It was enough to start her in some small way of business; at all events, to keep her from want for some time to come. In due time the nurse quitted her, the landlady having returned about the 14th of March; and she never saw or heard of Mrs. Beakham any more. It was after her departure that Susanna turned to the letter she had found. As its thin paper might have denoted to her, it came from abroad. It was addressed to 'Lady Anne Somerby,' was dated at Constantinople, and its writer was a gentleman who signed himself 'Herbert Campion.' There was not much in it which, of itself, possessed any importance. Susanna afterwards parted with it, under circumstances presently to be described; but the constant perusal of it impressed nearly every word of it upon her memory. It addressed the lady as 'dear aunt.' It spoke much of the writer's wife, regretting the continued necessity for his absence from England; alluded, in ardent language, to the hope that he might by-and-bye hear of his wife's becoming a mother. There was also some obscure reference to a certain fear and anxiety, known, it would seem, to Lady Anne herself, but not so expressly named as to inform every reader of its nature. The letter was directed to the above lady, at Scarlington House, Fulham. For months—years, indeed—Susanna continued in her lodgings, not venturing to take any one into her confidence; but torn by remorse at having sold her child, and by anxiety for that child's future destiny, she many a time set off, intending to discover Scarlington House, and, at all events, seek to know something as to her baby's present position; but she always felt fearful of betraying herself. Mr. and Mrs. Campion, if they were indeed the purchasers of her infant, would very likely treat her, did she molest them, as but an extortionate impostor. She was provided with such a sum of money as, for a long time, would free her from all fear of destitution; and her father's heart so far softened towards her, that he, from time to time, bestowed some assistance upon her. Possibly, had she been compelled to work for a livelihood, she might have been spared from brooding over the wrong she had both suffered and done. Some time in the year 1840 she got acquainted with the wife of a baker, who had

quitted Fulham to set up a shop near Euston Square. My sister-in-law, hearing whence Mrs. Krout (that was her name) had recently removed, asked her eagerly if she knew Scarlington House. Mrs. Krout answered that she had lived just opposite to it for years; upon which poor Susanna went into a hundred questions as to the house, its inmates, &c., &c.

"Mrs. Krout answered all she was able, but expressed some curiosity in her turn. She said, 'Well, I never thought Scarlington House at all a wonderful place myself. But, sure enough, there must be something funny about it. You're not the only person I've known who was devoured to know all about it. Just two years, last March, a gentleman—a real gentleman—though I could never make out who he could ever be—came and lodged for a week in my bit of a room on the first floor over our shop; and when he was there, all his talk—all he ever cared about—was to find out about the people in Scarlington House. I know he fancied that I told him all of my own accord, and that I did not see how keen he was at asking all about them. I declare there was not one thing, whether about the mistress or the servants, or about the very physick sent in by the doctor, that he did not try to find out.' Such in substance were Mrs. Krout's words.

"And when my sister-in-law ascertained that this mysterious visitor had come to lodge with Mrs. Krout exactly about the time at which she had parted with her infant, she felt compelled to believe that, whoever he was, he had in some strange way become acquainted, partly or wholly, with the dark transaction; and thence there grew in the poor woman's mind a fear lest the position she had procured for her child might be taken from her after all. But still her doubts and terrors led to no action on her own part. Late in the year 1841 her father died. Previously to this event—two years before, indeed—I had obtained the living I now hold, and had been married to his elder daughter. I met poor Susanna at her father's funeral. I had never seen her since her disastrous elopement; but sorrow and (as it struck me even then) secret self-reproach had effected in less than five years the changes due to five-and-twenty. To my great satisfaction, the injustice done her in her father's lifetime was not prolonged after his death; and she and my wife were left equal sharers in Mr. Roberts's money. She was now beyond all danger of actual poverty. On the single Sunday she spent in Liverpool she happened to hear, in one of the churches, a very forcible sermon on the guilt and misery of continued deceit. The preacher—I was present myself—dwelt on confession and disclosure as in all cases the only safe and happy course. Whether he would have applied his rule to so strange a case as Susanna's it may not be easy to say; but in her mind his counsel sank very deep. She made no attempt to confide in us. Unhappily, there was never that accord between herself and my wife which, between sisters, should exist. So Susanna went back to London, and once in full possession of her share in the property, she actually made a movement towards finding out Mr. Campion, and seeking at least a partial reunion with her lost child. She ascertained that he was employed abroad by the Foreign Office; also that he was about to throw up the duties he had for so many years undertaken, and was likely to return to England very early in the coming March. Bent upon an interview with him, Susanna contrived to find him at his hotel, within a few hours of his arrival in London. She believed that in his house her child had

found a home; and, moreover, that the whole matter was done with his sanction and knowledge. Mrs. Beakham's words had seemed to imply as much. That Mr. Campion was himself the dupe of a plot had never struck my poor heedless sister. When she, summoning all her courage, told him why she had sought him out, he showed the utmost surprise and scorn; but on her producing the letter to Lady Anne Somerby, his manner altered to one of horror and fear. As soon as he could master himself he begged her to go home, and await further tidings from him. He was going down to Brighton, where his wife and (as he had hitherto supposed her) his child were living; once there, he would mercilessly probe this story to the bottom, and if he found Mrs. Roberts' claim to be just, he would at once restore her child into her hands,—so suddenly did Susanna find the matter taken altogether out of her own power. The next day but three brought her a letter from Mr. Campion, dated at Brighton. It told her that he had found her story to be only too well founded; that, heart-breaking as the discovery was, the proof was too complete to suffer him to doubt. He did not write to reproach Mrs. Roberts, but to arrange for placing the little girl in her hands. Of the child herself he would not be unmindful. She had, though wrongfully, borne his name. She was the only innocent partner in the guilty conspiracy; and he would give her mother such help towards bringing her up as she might in reason demand of him. He proposed sending the child, along with a trustworthy nurse, to a lodging-house (which he named) in Hornsey. There they might continue for two or three weeks; in that time, perhaps, so young a child would have partially forgotten her previous life. In return, he asked of Mrs. Roberts to promise that she would, by keeping the matter a secret from the public, spare him the misery of an exposure. And this promise Susanna promptly gave.

"I think, madam, I have now brought this painful story down to the period of my wife's sudden summons to London. Your own letter intimates that you are already aware how Susanna's dangerous illness was just at its height when the child was brought to her house; and how, in consequence, her daughter was lost to her again.

"When she recovered she went to the house in Hornsey, and there was informed that the young woman and the little girl had gone away several weeks ago. She came to the conclusion that the persons from whom she had demanded her child, had determined, after all, to keep her; and she now felt herself too weak, too cowed, too conscience-stricken, to make a second demand of the sort. Her sister's sympathy she did not care to seek; and my wife did not think fit to tell her—having no idea of its full significance—of what had happened in her illness; so it has remained a secret until this very day. What will be the issue of the discovery lies in the hands of a Wiser than ourselves. Meantime, let me assure you, madam, of my earnest wish to do what shall seem kind and just in this matter. Awaiting a further communication, I am, madam,

"Yours most obediently,

"MORGAN DOWLAS."

And this was the end of the dreadful letter. Eva had kept her resolution: She had read it straight through without once laying it down. Her arm ached with holding it; but, as if a spell enthralled her, she kept it close before her eyes for minutes after she had read its very latest word.

THE DIVINA COMMEDIA.

ALIGHIERI DANTE, by far the greatest Italian poet, sprang from one of the most illustrious families in Florence, and received an education at the greatest Continental universities. Before he was nine years old he conceived a passion for a little lady of about the same age, whose name, Beatrice, he has immortalized in his great poem; she also belonged to one of the first houses in the city. Although removed by death at an early age, her memory left a deep impress on the poet's mind. Dante married a lady named Gemma, who bore no very distant resemblance to Xantippe, and a separation soon ensued. Early in life Dante gained some military renown, and he became still more eminent by the acquisition of civic honours, being, at the age of twenty-five, chosen to be one of the chief magistrates of his native city. At thirty-five he rose to be supreme magistrate, from which time all the misfortunes of his after life are to be dated. The country at that period was much distracted by the dissensions between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, to the former of which factions Dante belonged. The Guelphs, again, were divided into two parties—the Neri and Bianchi, or *Blacks* and *Whites*,—who regarded each other and the Ghibellines with equal hostility. Dante strove hard to reconcile the divisions in his own party, but in vain; and soon not only the city, but the whole state, became involved in contention,—blows followed words, and street battles were often the result of private feuds. The leaders of the different factions were banished from the city; but peace was as distant as ever, and Dante was sent on a mission to Rome to solicit papal mediation. While absent the people were maliciously incited against him; his house was destroyed, and he himself forbidden to return to Florence, under the penalty of being burned alive. Dante took refuge in Arezzo, whither his partisans followed him, and they gradually gathered strength till they mustered about 10,000. Thus powerful, they made an unsuccessful attempt to surprise Florence. The poet, thoroughly disgusted at the jealousies which still existed among the party, at this time quitted the confederacy.

The remainder of Dante's life was spent in wandering about from place to place, living a life of dependence, till at last he found a resting-place for the remainder of his days under the protection of Novello da Polenta, lord of Ravenna. It is supposed that the "Commedia" was written for the most part during his wandering life, and it is by far the best of all his works. Its subject is the mysteries of the invisible world—a subject agreeable enough, doubtless, to the age in which the poet lived. The monks of St. Dominic and St. Francis had, in the exercise of the grossest spiritual jugglery, rekindled the fanaticism which had been sleeping for centuries,—fire, boiling tar, serpents, &c., were brought to act on living persons, whose sufferings gave a horrid reality to the illusion. Some

such spectacle, it is supposed, gave the poet his idea of the "Commedia;" and throughout the poem he introduces many noted individuals, who had made themselves prominent in public affairs, and according to his party feeling, he assigns their positions in the three sections of his work.

Dante died on the 14th September, 1321, from fever brought on by fatigue and disappointment resulting from his failure in an embassy to Venice on behalf of his patron, Guido.

Dante was the author of several other works, but the "Commedia," of which we subjoin an epitome, is the one on which his fame solely rests, and it is divided into three parts. It was called a comedy because, though it opened sadly, it had a happy termination. The term "Divina" was added to it years afterwards by his admirers in Italy.

L'INFERNO.

Hell, or the Infernal Regions, is represented in the poem as an inverted cone, formed of nine circles, narrowing as they deepen—each circle sensibly increasing in suffering; within each circle there being various degrees of punishment, in accordance with the greater or lesser amount of guilt which had been incurred by the victim. In the lowermost depth of all, in the centre of the lowest cavity, sat Lucifer chained. The poet sets forth by describing his wanderings in a wilderness, where, seeing no means of escape, and being beset by wild beasts, he began to despair, when in these straits he sees a human form approaching, to whom he at once appeals for help. Virgil, whose form it was, at once consented to aid in extricating Dante from his perilous position; but the only way from the dangerous wood was through the unknown world of spirits; and Dante, though with doubt and hesitation, consented to be guided in this way by Virgil. They soon arrived at the gate of hell, over whose portals were inscribed the words,—

"Through me unto the land of woe,
Through me unto eternal pain,
Through me unto the souls accurst.
By justice was my Maker moved;
By power divine my fabric rose,
By wisdom high and primal love
All who before me were create
Immortals were; and I eternal am.
Abandon hope who enters here."

The introduction here given is terrible, and within were wailings, sighs, and lamentations; but this was but the entrance hall, occupied by a class of "angels" who, when Satan and his legions rebelled, remained, like Meroz, neutral. Passing from this place, the two travellers arrive at "the mournful shore of Acheron," where they found Charon conducting miserable souls across the river. Charon at first would have repelled Dante; but Virgil at once reproved the old boatman, "whose fierce eyes

like fire-wheels flamed," and ordered him to row them across; and thus they were brought to the first circle of the pit. Here there were neither tears nor cries, but only the continual sighs of those who, not having been baptized, were excluded from Paradise. Virgil himself belonged to the number of those located in this circle, and classed with him were Horace, Ovid, Homer, &c. The cavities in this circle contained sages and heroes of long-past ages who had been noted for virtuous and honourable lives; amongst them were Cæsar, Brutus, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and numberless others. In this place were also all unbaptized infants.

In the second circle, at whose entrance,—

"With ghastly grin, horrific Minos stands,
And tries each sinner as he steps within,"

were found those whose souls had been lost through indulgence in guilty love; and here Dante found Dido, Cleopatra, Semiramis, Helen, and also Francesca di Rimini, whose story forms one of the most beautiful episodes of "L'Inferno." Francesca had been warmly attached to Paolo, a younger son of the lord of Rimini, but her father obliged her to marry Paolo's elder brother, Lancillotto. Francesca and Paolo had frequent opportunities of meeting. The result was fatal to her fidelity, and Lancillotto, having surprised them, put them both to death on the spot. The poet faints at the conclusion of Francesca's story, which, at his request, she had herself related, and on his recovery finds himself at the entrance of the third circle. Here gluttons were punished by being subjected to continual showers of "hailstones and snow, with turbid water blent," and—

"Cerberus, monster strange and fierce,
Barks dog-like with his triple throat
Over the spirits in the swamp immersed.
His eyes are red; gory and black his beard;
His belly huge, and clawed his horny hands.
Clutching the souls, he skins and quarters them."

The fourth circle was guarded by Plutus, "man's great enemy," and was tenanted by spendthrifts and misers; and here the poet has an opportunity of speaking of the avarice of popes and priests, as he notices that among the occupants are many who were "shaven-crowned." The fifth circle was reached by a strange, wild way, which led to the Stygian lake, whose bleak waters were filled by "the souls of those who were by violent passions swayed," and here they fought and tore each other. The two companions now walked along the banks of the lake till they reached a tower, whence they were ferried across the dark waters to the city of Dis, whose walls were of iron, and whose mosques glowed with eternal fire. Here they were refused entrance by the demons who guarded the city, and while debating how best to proceed, suddenly there sprang up before them three "furies, stained with blood." Virgil recognized them as Megæra, Tisiphone, and Alecto; and the heathen poet at once caused Dante to cover his eyes, as the furies were preparing to show him the head

of the Medusa, which would turn him to stone. But while thus engaged, over the lake comes a messenger from heaven, who disdainfully scatters the crowd of demons before him, and at a touch of his light wand the gates of Dis fly open. Free access was now given the two adventurers, who found that in this place were tormented arch-heretics and their followers, being entombed in sepulchres of fire, whence proceeded most piercing cries. Passing along a narrow path beside the city wall the two were arrested by a voice which called on Dante to return. The voice came from Farinata di Uberti, formerly a leader of the Ghibellines, who at Arbia (1620) defeated the Guelphs, to which party Dante belonged. The shade had recognized the poet as a countryman, and inquired,—

“ ‘Who were thine ancestors?’

And I, most anxious to obey,
Nothing conceal'd, but named them all.
Thereat he, thinking, raised his brows;
Then said, ‘Fiercely adverse were they
To me, my race, and party too,
And from our Florence I dispersed them twice.’

‘If banish'd, they from every side
Each time return'd,’ I quick replied;
‘An art thy friends have fail'd to learn.’

* * * * *

‘And if,’ referring to my pert remark, he said,
‘My kindred have not learnt to win their own again,
More grieved am I thereat than by this fiery bed.
But not yet fifty times shall Proserpine,
Who reigneth here, her pallid face relume
Ere thou shalt know the hardness of that art.

‘Now, by thy wish once more
The pleasant earth to see, tell why thy people so severe
In all their laws against my party are?’

‘Remembrance of the rout,’ I answer'd him,
‘And of the slaughter which the Arbia dyed,
Doth cause those edicts in our temples still.’

At this he, sighing, shook his head, and said,
‘In that affray not I alone did fight;
And not without just cause I with the others moved.
But I alone stood forth dissentient when
Our Florence was by all unto destruction doom'd;
’Twas I who openly forbade the deed.’

‘Ah, may for that thy seed yet find repose!’”

Conversing still further, Farinata disclosed the names of some of his companions in misery; he also told the poet that the condemned had a foreknowledge of future events, but were ignorant of those which were presently conspiring:—

“ ‘Like aged eyes,’ he said, ‘we can discern
The things that are remote;
So much of light the Ruler high allows;

But those at hand or happening no impression make
 Upon our faculties; and, but for new arrivals here,
 We of the state you're in no knowledge should possess.
 So mayst thou comprehend that altogether dead
 Shall our intelligence at last become,
 When of futurity the gate by dying time is shut."

Passing by some precipitous rocks they reach the next circle, which is guarded by "that infamy of Crete, the Minotaur." One of the places of punishment in this circle was a boiling, seething sea of blood, in which, according to their degrees of guilt, were immersed tyrants and despots. Nissus, a centaur, who accompanies the two poets here, points out Alexander the Great, the Syracusan Dionysius, immersed to the forehead; at shallower parts of the bloody sea some were pointed out whose feet alone were covered. The companions then pass to a wild forest, on every side of which were heard groans and wailings from invisible sufferers. Virgil then told Dante to pull a little sprig from an aged thorn, when from the broken part there streamed forth blood, and a voice shrieked out,—

"O cruel bruise!
 Hast thou no spark of pity left?
 Men were we once, though rooted bushes now."

The twig was dropped in terror, and it was explained that suicides were here transformed into trees, on whose branches the harpies browsed and tore them with their cruel teeth. Beyond the forest they came upon a desert of burning sand, covered thickly with "flocks of naked souls, on whom flakes of fire fell in showers, thickly as snow on the Alps." This place was appropriated to those who had defied God upon the earth.

Shunning carefully the flaming desert, they skirt the forest of suicides till they reach a river of blood, along whose banks they passed on their way towards the next circle, which was to be reached by descending a tremendous precipice. To effect this descent they had to mount the back of a monster—Fraud, he was called—who had the face of a good and amiable man, with "aspect fair and mild," but the rest of his body was serpentine. This circle they found to be divided into ten trenches or gulfs, appropriated to the different kinds of fraudulent persons. In one gulf were placed seducers, to torment whom, as they passed along,—

"Horn'd fiends were placed with lashes huge,
 Which they plied smartly on the spirits' backs."

Crossing a narrow bridge they reached the place where flatterers were doomed to abide, rolling amid filth and mud. The next gulf contained those who had been guilty of simony; they were punished by being inverted in the earth, their feet alone being above it, and the soles of their feet exposed to continual fire. The next contained those who had claimed on earth the power to foretell future events, who were condemned to have their heads twisted;—

“ For to his back the chin of each was screwed,
So that his face look'd forth behind : ”

And thus, in their woeful trouble, the tears they shed coursed down their backs. In this place, amongst others, Dante introduces Michael Scott, the Scottish wizard, so called, and says of him that he “ truly worked many a sleight of magical deceit.” The next gulf was dark and full of boiling pitch, in which were immersed public men who had acted fraudulently, and ever as they appeared on the top of the lake demons with barbed spears struck at them. At this place the two adventurers witnessed a dispute and quarrel among the demons themselves, in which two of them were also accidentally immersed in the lake of boiling pitch. The next gulf was occupied by hypocrites, wearing long cloaks lined with lead, and tormented by enormous caps upon their heads, which outside were of gold, but heavy with lead within. Other gulfs contained thieves and robbers, who were tormented by venomous serpents; evil counsellors, who were wreathed in continual flames; those who “ had gathered guilt from sowing discord round ” were subjected to continual wounds from a demon who stood by them with a whetted sword, the wounds continually healing, and being again inflicted. In this gulf they meet with Mahomet and—

“ Caliph Ali, sorely grieved—
Slash'd in the face from chin to frontal bone.
“ All with us in this den beheld,
Scandal and schism in their lifetime did sow,
And for that cause they're cloven here.
A demon lurks behind, who splits us thus;
And with his whetted scimitar
Regashes us when each completes
The circuit of the doleful road;
For every wound is closed and heal'd
Ere we unto his stand return.' ”

The last compartment of this terrible circle was allotted to forgers, alchemists, and such-like deceivers, who were afflicted with various diseases—leprosy, dropsy, and other terrible disorders.

We now arrive at the last circle of L'Inferno, to which the adventurers are guided by the sound of a horn, loud as a thunder-blast. The circle was guarded by men of gigantic stature, ranged in terrible array along its edge. One of these giant warders, at Virgil's request, took up the two by one hand, and set them gently down into the bottom of the pit. This lower abyss of Inferno they found to be a region of ice,—the doomed abode of traitors, and presided over by the great arch-apostate Satan, who, in this accursed land, had under his charge Judas, and other treacherous criminals. After meeting and conversing with several of the condemned, Dante meets with Count Ugolino, who had on earth by treasonable conduct gained the mastery of Pisa; he was here found gnawing at the

head of Ruggiere, the Archbishop of Pisa. From the story which Ugolino tells we learn that the archbishop confined him in a tower, in which Ugolino's four guiltless children and himself were slowly starved to death, and this cruel conduct Ruggiere is doomed to expiate by furnishing Ugolino with a cannibal repast of never-satisfying food. Soon after this the two poets saw the banners of Inferno's king, who is himself immersed, at the centre of hell and the earth, in ice to the breast. He was seen to be of more than giant height, and,—

“ If he was once as beautiful as he is ugly now,
And yet against his Maker raised a rebel front,
All sorrow well may be attributed to him.

“ How marvellous he seem'd to me,
When on his head three faces I perceived !

“ Vermilion flamed the middle one.

The other two were close to it ;

One looking o'er each shoulder-blade ;

And at his crest the three were join'd.

Livid and yellow-hued that on the right ;

The other like to those that Ethiopia breeds,

Where first the Nile unto the plain descends.

“ Beneath each face were spread two mighty wings,

In size adapted to a bird so huge :

Ships' sails of greater span I ne'er beheld.

They were not feather'd, but on creaking frames,

Smooth-stretch'd like vampire vans ;

And as he flapp'd them, from him went three winds,

Which deeper froze his bath, Cocytus' lake.

“ With his six eyes he wept ; and down three beards

There foully slobber'd tears and bloody foam.

“ His teeth in every mouth a sinner champ'd,

As flax is in a crushing-mill :

Thus three at once were rack'd.

“ But from the chewing suffer'd less

He in the midst than from the monster's claws,

Which skinn'd his legs oft as his wounds were scarr'd.

“ ‘ The soul up there, who's tortured thus,’

My guide began, ‘ Judas Iscariot is :

His upper parts are bitten, and his lower claw'd.

Of those whose heads hang from the lips on either side,

Brutus is he who in the negro mouth is held :

Lo, how he writhes, yet utters not a moan !

The other's Cassius, strongly limb'd and vigorous.’ ”

The poets, after taking a full view of the arch-traitor, Satan, leave the abyss of hell; Virgil, taking Dante on his shoulders, climbed round the body of the fiend, thus passing the centre of gravity, and they then found themselves ascending where before they seemed to be descending. Following now the course of a narrow stream, they shortly find that they have arrived at—

IL PURGATORIO,

Which is another cone, divided into terraces rising one above another, each terrace or circle being devoted to the expiation of a mortal sin, where repenting souls are prepared for heaven. Arrived at the foot of the mountain, they found it too steep for them to climb, and accordingly the poets inquired of some spirits how they were to ascend. They found the pathway at first very difficult, but the higher they got the easier the way became. The first spirits they met were those who died by violence, and had had time for repentance at their last hour. Near this place they meet with Sordello, a Mantuan priest, and there ensues a conversation between him and Dante about Italy, its faults and misfortunes. Sordello afterwards guided the wanderers to a flowery valley in which they were to pass the night; two angels, clad in green, keeping watch over the valley while they slept. During the night, however, and while they were sleeping, they were conveyed by spirits up the mountain to the gate of purgatory, where on their awakening they found themselves. An angel kept the gate, which on their approach he immediately opened, and ushered them into the first circle, which was found to be inhabited by the proud, whose penitential expiation consisted in the carrying of heavy weights which bent them down to the earth. Within this circle were numerous sculptures in white marble, recording eminent examples of humility. Another angel, clothed in white, conducted them into the second circle, which was tenanted by the envious, who were clothed in garments of horsehair. The third was inhabited by the choleric, who were suffocated by smoke and fog, and the place was darker than the darkest night. Glad to escape from this quarter, they next found themselves in the circle allotted to the indolent and lazy, who were compelled to run about continually. In the next, which was devoted to the avaricious, who were laid bound and prostrate on the ground, the two poets suddenly felt the purgatorial mountain shake under them, and they then heard the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* sung, a chant which they were told was raised whenever a soul had completed its purification, and became eligible for heaven. The happy spirit on this occasion was Statius, the poet, who now joined their company, and proceeded with Virgil and Dante on his journey upwards to his blessed abode. The sixth circle was the place of torment for gourmands and epicures, who were punished by hunger and thirst, while within sight were trees laden with sweet and delicious fruit, but utterly beyond their reach. The last circle was the abode of the incontinent, who are purged with fire.

Passing through the fire likewise—though with some hesitation on Dante's part—they found themselves on the summit of the purgatorial mountain, and at the terrestrial paradise, whence is the way to the heavenly regions. Here Dante meets with Beatrice, who, after reproving the poet for certain irregularities into which he had fallen since she died,

prepares him for the celestial visions to which she is about to conduct him—Beatrice being now his guide, Virgil at this place having suddenly disappeared, being allowed to go no further.

IL PARADISO.

This last place consists of nine distinct and separate divisions or heavens, and Dante, while travelling through them under the guidance of Beatrice, has all his theological doubts explained and solved. The nine heavens are composed of seven planetary abodes; the eighth being situated in the fixed stars, and the ninth, greatest and last, being the fixed seat of the Deity. The first heaven is in the moon, where dwell those women who, having first vowed themselves to celibacy, afterwards married, and faithfully kept their marriage vows. The second was in Mercury, inhabited by those who had lived virtuous lives on earth for the sake of distinction. The third was in Venus; the fourth was in the sun, where abode those who had been great in the church on earth. Mars, the fifth, was the dwelling-place of those who had died in the Crusades, and in doing battle for the Christian faith. Jupiter held those who, while living, had been in authority, and had been just and righteous in all their dealings. In Saturn, the seventh, were the spirits of those who had spent their lives on earth in religious retirement and meditation. Beatrice next led the poet to the realm of the glorified church, which was in the fixed stars; here he was brought into contact with the apostles, who questioned Dante as to his faith. He was then borne into the ninth heaven—the great central point of the universe. Round the Eternal, in the centre, revolved circles of cherubim and seraphim, dominions, powers, angels, and archangels. Here also was pointed out the river of life, and the final abodes of the blessed, who were a countless multitude, clad in robes of snowy white, seated on thrones, on one of which Beatrice now seated herself.

The poem ends abruptly, and the last two sections of the "Commedia" lack the interest of the "Inferno"—few even of Dante's keenest admirers caring to follow him throughout the last part, though in the second there is something to admire. The whole "Commedia" has, however, ever been considered a poem of the highest order. The poet is himself the hero, and perhaps in no poem ever written has a poet so completely revealed his own character and feelings; the simplicity of the style, however, is such as to do away with any idea of egotism on the part of the writer. As if conscious of his own inferior wisdom, he is ever accompanied by a superior intelligence, and is continually receiving instruction and enlightenment. The Christian and heathen systems of theology are sometimes curiously intermingled, and in this respect alone does it bear any affinity to the Nibelungenlied. In Dante's treating the heathen gods as something more than mere imaginary beings he had some show of

reason, for in all patristic literature we find the Fathers writing of them as devils or fallen angels. Dante takes none of them out of the Inferno ; he finds them there, and there only.

Tradition has it that Dante owed much of the beauty of the "Commedia" to the inspiration of a dream : this may or may not be ; the poet writes his poem as a vision ; but critics have been very much divided in opinion as to the object he had in writing it. Critical dissertations on Dante are almost as numerous as those to which Homer himself has given birth ; the Italian, like the Greek poet, having been the subject of the highest eulogium and the most severe invective. One of these critics, Gabriele Rossetti, wrote a work entitled the "Comento Analitico" (1826), in which he tried to show that Dante and all the Italian poets of the Middle Ages used a style in which they veiled their hatred of the Papacy, and concealed true religion, under the form of a woman beloved by them. Whatever may be thought of Rossetti's opinion, his work called forth an immensity of hostile criticism, and was the foundation of a new school of interpretation of Dante, which has even yet numerous followers in Italy.

Editions and translations of the "Commedia" have been numerous, the German being considered the best and most faithful : the English translations of Carey and Wright are both excellent. That which we have taken our extracts from is a beautifully printed one lately published by Messrs. Edmonston and Douglas (Edinburgh), and has been translated by Mr. W. P. Wilkie, from the text of Fraticelli (Florence, 1860) ; but the translator admits having occasionally taken views of Dante's meaning for which none of his editors are responsible.

CÆLO ICTUS.

BOB SPAVINS'S BRIDAL.

It was full two years since I had seen my friend Bob Spavins last, and about an equal number of months since I had even heard of or from him, whether by report or otherwise. The last time I had seen him was when we had bid each other a tender farewell, and I had come up to the great metropolis to push my way in the world, and (more immediately) in the office of Messrs. Slink, Wriggle, and Baulk, attorneys-at-law. Bob, who was a medical student, was then what was technically known as "going up for his first,"—*i.e.*, upon the point of taking a preliminary step towards the attainment of the high Degree of doctor of Medicine; and I well remember, ere we parted, congratulating him upon the proud position which, prospectively, he occupied, and sympathizing with the very low state of his finances at that moment; and upon the very gloomy present which seemed somewhat unnecessarily to precede so bright a future. Poor fellow, I had heard from him many times since then, and matters had not seemed to be mending. The "first," by which I understood first examination, had, indeed, been passed; but that feat accomplished, Bob had sunk into the easy-going, good-natured laziness which somehow characterized him, had wholly exhausted what of worldly possessions in the shape of trinkets, books of reference, &c., still remained to him, and had now for long been eking out a precarious existence in the employ now of this brother practitioner, and now of that, disappearing from, and turning up at, the most out-of-the-way and incongruous localities to be found upon the entire map of England. I had begun, indeed, to give him up as a bad job—for, be it known, this oft-mentioned "first" had not itself been accomplished till after years of idleness and ill-success;—I had begun to fear that he was destined in this world to be nothing better than a failure and another man's drudge, when suddenly the intelligence of his approaching marriage conveyed to me in a vast and eloquent letter, accompanied by a request that I should act as "best man" upon the occasion, upset all my gloomy forebodings, and greatly rejoiced my spirit upon his account. "The lady whom I have chosen to accompany me in my journey through life," stated a portion of this fine composition—decidedly the greatest achievement of Spavins's life—"and share with me the monetary and social advantages, though, happily, not the labours of the profession which I have selected, is perhaps even less distinguished by natural beauties of person than by a grace of character and unbounded elevation of mental attributes rarely to be met. In making the choice which I have made," it continued, in a high vein of moral sentiment, "I have not suffered my passions to outrun my judgment, nor yet allowed myself to be influenced by mere sordid considerations unbecoming our common human nature." For the rest it stated, as regarded the "sordid considerations," that the lady was possessed of some fortune and considerable expectations; as

regarded others, that, though not of so lofty a rank as that to which Spavins might doubtless have aspired, she was "highly respectable," "greatly accomplished," and, finally, "all that the heart could desire."

Great was my delight—I might almost say exultation—upon receiving this epistle. Vastly was I impressed by the eloquence and loftiness of its tone; greatly was I flattered that I of all men should be chosen for the post of "best man," and deeply did I sympathize with the true nobility and disinterestedness of Spavins's sentiments. It was all soon arranged: I was to go down the evening before the auspicious day, to be introduced—as was but right—to Spavins's bride; I was to sleep for that night at his lodgings, and the next day—but we have not come to that yet. I now, in the interval, also learned something further of the future Mrs. Spavins, and of the manner in which the engagement had come about. She was, it seemed, the daughter of a respectable small tradesman, who, having failed in business, had not since been heard of, but was supposed to have quitted the country, and sought shelter in the colonies. She now lived with a maiden aunt, who kept a periodical-and-tobacco-and-general-light-literature-gingerbeer-and-lollipop-shop in a secluded street of a large town, and who was reputed to be a millionaire on a small scale. The fortune which Spavins's intended already possessed had been derived from another aunt, deceased (in the greengrocery line), and was estimated variously at from four to seven hundred pounds—no mean sum, considering that a ten-pound note had been for many years the acme of Spavins's hopes; and a real honest sovereign, full weight, was a coin with which he was strangely unfamiliar. The manner of their acquaintance had been thus: Spavins had been assisting a surgeon of great repute in that neighbourhood, Mr. Cellular Tissue, noted for his successful diagnosis of cut fingers and sties on the eye. Miss Polhymina Cliggs (the name of the bride elect) had been suffering under this latter affliction, and her usual attendant, the great Mr. Tissue, being out when sent for to her assistance, Spavins had been called in upon the emergency. Now be it known that Spavins had ere now ogled Miss Cliggs, and Miss Cliggs had ogled Spavins, and this affection of the eye might, if desired, almost be looked upon as a judgment upon another affection she had but slightly endeavoured to conceal. Be it also known that Spavins's knowledge of diseases of the eye, and of surgery generally, was strictly limited, and that it was not his wont to take upon himself medical duties other than those referred to in the inscription written in illuminated characters upon Mr. Tissue's window,—“Prescriptions accurately compounded.” But here was an opportunity such as might never occur again!—here was the flood-time of “the tide in the affairs of Spavins!”—and, to his everlasting credit be it said, he rose equal to the occasion! He had called upon Miss Cliggs; he had carefully examined her eye; he had shaken his head twice; had coughed behind his hand once; and meanwhile, having brought to recollection a surgical operation performed upon

himself under similar circumstances by a venerated nurse in other days, he had suddenly produced from some unseen receptacle a wedding ring hired for the deed, and had applied it to the swollen eyelid of the fair Polhymina. The significance of this action was not lost upon that highly accomplished young lady. In process of time, and owing, doubtless, to the skilful treatment of Spavins, the eye recovered; but the inflammation but transferred itself to her heart. It is doubtful, indeed, whether he ever intended a deeper meaning than usual to be attached to his slightly unprofessional mode of cure; but it certainly assumed such proportions in the imagination of his gratified patient, and she deeply pondered the circumstance. What if a wedding ring, wielded by his hands, had produced so much of health to her physical being, was there not a craving within which it might also still—a sad complaint of single blessedness which it might remove? And so things came about. Spavins, nothing loth, and not much troubled with scruples as to social position, met her advances in a similar spirit. The maiden aunt was gained over to the cause, and everything happily arranged.

A journey of a few hours brought me to the scene of operations, and Spavins was at the station to meet me. He was a tall, thin young man, with a lean visage, and afflicted with a slight soreness of the eyes, and a decided weakness of the knees. His clothes invariably suggested the idea that they had been made for some one else, and hung about him, bagging in unsuspected places, and wrinkling where they should be smooth. His nether garments were ordinarily too short for the limbs it was their duty to cover, and disclosed a long perspective of stocking, imparting a juvenile and growing aspect to his *physique* generally. And so also with his arms, which seemed to have a facility peculiar to themselves for protruding from unlooked-for places—now appearing somewhere among, or between, or beneath his coat-tails, and now found deliberately hooked to his arm-pits, retained there apparently by some muscular or mechanical action unknown to the generality of man. The proper and graceful disposal of these members was, indeed, a never-ceasing source of difficulty and anxiety to poor Spavins. Somehow, they *would not* be thrust out of sight or kept to their proper functions and uses. They were always getting in his way or some one else's; either he was knocking some one's breath out with them or imparting an electric shock to himself by striking his "funny-bone" against the corner of a chair. If it was possible for any one to trip over his own arms, then assuredly Spavins would have tripped over his; as it was, they always looked as if they were lent out, or had been joined on to him after the rest of his body was completed. But the Spavins of to-day was a very different man from the Spavins of a few months back. His face was radiant with smiles, his step was light and jaunty, his language was choice and elegant, and but that the physical conformation remained, but that he first nearly knocked me down, and then partially squeezed my hand to mummy upon my arrival, I might

almost have doubted that it was the same. There was a leer in his eye, a self-confident wag in his hat, a certain rising upon the toes in walking, and a change in the tone of his voice, which portended great things.

Let me hurry over the events of that evening. We walked together to the abode of love. I was presented to the maiden aunt; ditto to Mr. Rowdydow Riggler, uncle and farmer from the country, come up for the interesting occasion; ditto to two female cousins, likewise from the country, the Misses Turnip Swedes, who had just stepped in to tea; ditto to another female friend, Miss Ida Tucker, who had renown as a poetess in the halfpenny journals; ditto to Master Riggler, who made faces at every one, spoke with a fearfully rustic accent, and otherwise misbehaved; and finally to the bride elect herself, who merits a more lengthened description.

Miss Polhymina Cliggs was in many respects the opposite of her lover. In appearance they were vastly different. His figure was long and angular; hers was short and quadrilateral: lanky was the adjective corresponding to his—dumpy was that corresponding to hers: he was easy-going, slow, and careless; she was quick, nervous, but undemonstrative. Her neck was short, and thick, and muscular; her eyes were small, and round, and prominent. Her face greatly reminded me of what, in my school days, I had known by the name of "soft tommy" or "plum duff,"—a sort of dumpling with occasional raisins peeping out at long intervals,—the raisins being represented on the visage of Miss Cliggs by small agglomerations of pimples, in which her constitution was excessively fertile. Her residence at a periodical-shop had not been without its effects on her education; she was very deeply read in the cheaper kinds of fiction, and a great admirer of the strange and horrible. It was this which added a dash of romance to her character, and was instrumental in bringing about those contradictions in which it abounded. She would shut herself up for a whole day with a novel telling of the wrongs of slighted beauty and innocence betrayed, and would read herself into a semi-torpid, semi-lachrymose state, very terrible to witness. On the whole, I am persuaded that Miss Polhymina Cliggs was a young lady possessed of very many virtues and good qualities; but I am also of opinion that they did not show upon the surface.

Brightly rose the sun upon Spavins's bridal morn, and bravely did Spavins prepare for the duties of the day. His "get-up" was something wholly unprecedented, his scarf alone, and the pattern of his trousers, being worth a journey all the way from London to see. To say in conventional phrase that the former included all the colours of the rainbow, would be a poor simile indeed: a rainbow radiated from a prism, and from thence transferred by a double reflector to the interior of a kaleidoscope, being the only approach to a description I should dare to volunteer. It seemed to be everywhere, to be all over him, and when he turned it full

upon you the effect was dazzling ! The waistcoat, which buttoned very low for the purpose of showing it off to the greatest advantage, was thrown completely into the shade, though this itself, composed of a yellow calico-sort of material, was an object by no means devoid of interest. And then the watch-chain ! I will not answer for it that it was all gold, or that there was anything at the end of it but a couple of keys, but this I will say of the effect—that it was stupendous ! The pattern was of simple elegance ; large massive links fitted into each other, and jingling with every stride of its possessor : such chains as we are accustomed to see hanging from the walls of noisome dungeons on the stage—or as are popularly associated with ghosts in retired country houses. As Spavins walked, and it clanked and swung to and fro, he seemed positively to stagger beneath its weight, combined with the proud consciousness of its possession. I have spoken of his nether garments, but I can scarcely trust myself to enter upon their description calmly. They were of the “grid-iron” pattern ; large bars of dark purple crossing at intervals upon a background of mauve, suggesting mathematical precision in the maker, and presenting a fortified and barricaded appearance generally. As usual, they were somewhat short, but this defect had been remedied by strapping them down tightly beneath the boots, and lowering them in other respects to the greatest possible extent. A coat well brushed, a hat quite new, kid gloves of the most approved colour, and a geranium in the button-hole, completed the *tout ensemble*, which no one could deny was original and imposing. Commensurate with the grandeur of his apparel was the elevation of Spavins’s moral sentiments on that eventful morning. He seemed suddenly to have become deeply impressed with the gravity of life, together with the beauties of nature, art, and most other things of or belonging to man, the earth, the solar system, or the universe itself. His homily upon the obligations of human beings towards their fellows sounded like a second edition of “The Whole Duty of Man,” extra bound, with corrections and amendments, and his prophetic vision of the joys of wedded life almost made me wish to change places with him on the spot. His comprehensive survey of love, death, affection, passion, pain, and pleasure, made while dividing his back hair with the aid of two looking-glasses, was a splendid effort of the imagination and the lungs ; while the deep sympathies and exquisite sensibilities he disclosed to me during the process of shaving fairly took my breath away. His countenance fully expressed all the great refinement of his feelings ; the general characteristics were still there, but its aspect was more lofty and self-satisfied. His step was firmer, his bearing more assured, and I am convinced that but for the ponderous grandeur of the watch-chain, and the uncompromising rigidity of the straps, his gait would have been easy if not positively erect.

The part of “best man” in a bridal ceremony is one of peculiar delicacy and peril ; in the first place, the title is somewhat invidious, and a man of little pretension and much native modesty may well object to be

saluted after such a fashion. In the second place, the duties which he has to perform are really of great and undoubted importance. Upon him devolves the responsibility of seeing that the "happy man" arrives at church at the proper hour ("bringing him up to time," as the sporting phrase would be); of seeing that he arrives there at all; to him is consigned the custody of the ring; and with him rests also the responsibility of producing it at the proper moment. He must be dreadfully cheerful, he must be awfully self-possessed, he must be at once imposing and occasionally facetious. After the religious ceremony is performed, he is supposed the especial custodian of the bridesmaids, and this of itself presumes a nature intrepid beyond the common; he drives home with them, being almost universally mistaken for the bridegroom; he is vociferously cheered by the little boys, he is obtrusively blessed by the old women, and carefully mobbed by attendant beggars of all sexes. Throughout the whole day he is, either with or against his will, in a position to which he does by no means aspire, and for which he is probably wholly unfitted by nature. He is, or at all events he ought to be, the *wit* of the company, the *funny man*. Others, such as the bride or bridegroom themselves, the father, mother, and other relatives, even the bridesmaids and the rest of the company, may be supposed to be sentimental and impressed, but this is a luxury by no means allowed to him; on him devolves the facetious element in the ceremony, and as he acquits himself in this respect is he worthy of commendation or the reverse. But chiefly does all this culminate at the breakfast! His speech is the one looked forward to provoke the greatest amount of mirth, that being understood to be in fact its sole object; if unable to evoke a smile by its success, it is at all events hoped he will by its failure, and perhaps it is after all a question which of the two courses is the more proper to pursue. Reflecting somewhat this way was I during the period already described, and while Spavins's spirit was soaring still higher and higher, mine, I must confess, was taking a slightly different direction. More than fifty times in the course of an hour I felt my waistcoat pocket to see if the ring was there, and more than twenty-five took it out to see if it was really the same. The weakness of the knees seemed partially to have transferred itself from Spavins's limbs to mine, and a certain creeping sensation of the skin, commencing about the middle of the back, and reaching up to the scalp, accompanied my anticipations of what was before me. But meanwhile time presses, and the all-important hour draws nigh. Faithful to my office, I hurry Spavins to the completion of his toilet, I bundle him into an attendant cab, and the church is gained.

Mr. Rowdydow Riggler and the bridesmaids are already at the church before us, looking hot, and fresh, and rosy. So also is Master Rowdydow Riggler, who cuts irreverent jokes at Spavins, which the latter bears with singular equanimity. I call the young gentleman aside, and surreptitiously pull his ear. He replies by demonstratively kicking my shins, and a deadly feud exists between us. More arrivals now make their appearance:

Miss Ida Toker, in a costume resembling a stage invitation of the tragic Muse. More arrivals: Mr. Cellular Tissue and Dr. Hippocampus Major, specially engaged to give the affair *éclat*. More arrivals: two young medical friends of Spavins, who nudge each other and keep up a perpetual but subdued titter, which at a little distance sounds like internal convulsions or eruptions, or something equally painful to contemplate. A buzz of expectation, and the bride arrives alone, Mr. Rowdydow Riggler, who is to give her away, and should have accompanied her, having been wholly innocent of that fact, and left her to her own devices. A slight stir, and a truculent-looking cabman makes his appearance and demands a fare, which I hastily pay to get rid of him, and then a dead silence, the clergyman appears, the procession is formed, and Spavins follows his blushing bride to the altar!

I have nothing to tell of the solemn ceremony which united Spavins and Miss Polhymina Cliggs, save that it passed off with perfect propriety, and doubtless to the satisfaction of all. I produced the ring at the proper moment; I assumed as compound an appearance of dignity and joviality as I was capable of, and let off three venerable jokes in the vestry as the various parties were signing their names. I drove home with three of the bridesmaids in a cab, and distributed sevenpence-halfpenny among a number of little boys who insisted upon standing on their hands presumably for our amusement. The others duly followed; Mr. and Mrs. Spavins doing the journey together, and all creating a vast excitement in the neighbourhood where was situated the miscellaneous mercantile establishment where Spavins had first met his bride. This establishment was of course closed for the day, and in it the company assembled, while the last touch was being given to the back parlour, where in great magnificence the bridal feast was spread. A brief pause suffices apparently to bring these arrangements to a completion, a general move is made towards the interior of the premises, and in another moment the banquet in all its splendour is open to our view!

And now, indeed, I may well pause, and reflect upon the magnitude of the task I have undertaken. How can I hope faithfully to portray the incidents of that breakfast?—how to describe the almost innumerable delicacies which awaited our ready onslaught? Where shall I find words to tell of the languid majesty of the bride, the gentle dignity of the bridegroom, the playful witticisms of his two friends, or the solemn grandeur of Dr. Hippocampus Major? Where is that inspiration to come from which would render justice to the bashful charms of the Misses Turnip Swedes; the magnificent condescension of Mr. Cellular Tissue; the not less magnificent appetite of Mr. Rowdydow Riggler; and the unwonted urbanity of Miss Primeval Riggler, sister and maiden aunt before alluded to? And oh! how to do even a still fainter justice to the dainties?—not carnally and on the spot, be it understood, for that I flatter myself I accomplished, but in narrative? how to do otherwise than malign the viands by

a too unpractised description of their worth? At the head of the table, and immediately before Mr. Cellular Tissue, who was voted to the chair, reposed in stern majesty the carcass of a goose, of strange and almost abnormal proportions; the neck curling gracefully over the body, and protruding from beneath the left wing, suggested the idea of a monstrous "Pharaoh's serpent," while that succulent portion known as the "Pope's nose" was alone a sufficient meal for a person of ordinary powers. Fronting this, and under the immediate and sympathizing supervision of Mr. Riggler, rose in simple dignity a bold, uncompromising round of boiled beef, yet uncut, and with a certain burly, jovial look, very winning and inviting. None of your knickknacks and flippant pretences of food here! your *pâtés*, your *vol-au-vents*, your *blanc-manges*—nothing of that sort for Spavins and his bride, nor yet for that acute housewife, Miss Primeval Riggler; least of all, for her brother, Mr. Rowdydow Ditto. Good honest boiled beef with lots of mustard, and strong substantial goose well stuffed with onions; that's the sort of thing for a wedding breakfast. Along the table, and disposed with considerable accuracy and effect beside the plate of each guest, was a bottle of Allsopp's best sparkling pale ale, the cork partially drawn, and leaning to one side in a dissipated and prematurely drunken fashion; while for those preferring it were certain brown jugs in the immediate vicinity, brimming over with Hanbury and Buxton's XX. and Meux's best brown stout on draught. Let me at once state that there was no champagne, nor any abominable imitation thereof, and let me moreover state that for my own part this was a relief of no ordinary kind. But there was sherry; oh yes, and there was port, two bottles, which were not, however, produced until a later period, and they had been bought from a grocer in the adjoining street, who was selling off. Of the first I state upon my honour that but for the time and circumstances I should never have been able to guess what it was; with the latter, which was provided more especially for the ladies, I did not meddle. Occupying the post of honour in the middle of the table was the bridal cake, with the traditional Cupid hovering upon the top, neatly secured by a piece of wire. A novel and pleasing appearance was given to this feature of the repast by surrounding its base with water-cresses, thereby combining nature and art in one harmonious whole. Next to the cake, on one side, was a pig's head, with so excessively merry and facetious an expression of countenance that it was impossible to regard it without smiling; upon the other a fine cut of bacon, very cheering to look upon. Both these were the gift of Mr. Riggler, who from his post of vantage surveyed them with a considerable amount of pride, not unmixed with feeling. But chiefly were the pies worthy of note. This was the department which Miss Primeval Riggler had taken under her own peculiar supervision, and the display was proportionally great. Of these there were no less than six,—that is, exclusive of other delicacies, about half a pie to each person. The mystery was, what they all contained. Externally they were exactly

alike, but was this really the case? were they so within? It is true some bulged out rather more at the top than others, and if an adventuresome spirit pursued his researches further, he came unexpectedly upon an inverted cup, which apparently formed a necessary portion of the ingredients; but whether the cup actually was so, or whether the placing it in that position was a mild joke upon the part of the cook, or whether it had got into some pies by accident and not into others, it was—in the want of proper information—impossible to decide. Within my own personal observation only two were actually carried by assault, and one was found to contain a mixture of raspberries, red currants, and a teacup; and the other, bone, gristle, and hard-boiled eggs. And what of the kidneys served up hot? and what of the eggs and bacon? and what of the haddock and red herring? not to say anything of a heterogeneous mass of boiled eggs and buttered toast, which fell down somehow from somewhere, and were ably turned into a slide by Master Riggler, who executed there-upon several surprising feats, sitting down, standing up, and going upon one leg, vociferously calling meanwhile upon the company generally to “keep the pot a-biling,” and finishing by falling in the midst, and utterly ruining his dress,—what, indeed? it would take volumes to tell of even one-half their merits.

It was a very great sight that breakfast, and one which the well-ordered mind could not but contemplate with pleasure. Great, for instance, was it to see Spavins in all the pomp, pride, and circumstance of the occasion, and to note the self-satisfied smile with which he surveyed the assembled guests. Great, also, was it to see Mrs. Spavins dressed all in white, and to watch the coquettish air with which she accepted the attentions of her bridegroom, as now he offered her another kidney, or now carved her several slices of bacon, carefully removing the outer skin. Nor could one look without a certain pride upon such portentous individuals as Dr. Hippocampus Major and Mr. Cellular Tissue, and feel that he sat at the same table and eat the same food. This former gentleman, be it remarked, seemed much struck with one of the Misses Turnip Swedes (between whom and Miss Primeval Riggler he had had his place assigned), and paid marked attention to her throughout. Dr. Hippocampus Major, besides his high repute as a physician, had also one as a gallant and man of the world, of which he was at least equally proud. The two medical friends of Spavins ably addressed themselves to the viands, and the greatest harmony prevailed: time flew by in a continued interchange of ideas and dishes, and a ceaseless flow of conversation and—beer.

But even a wedding breakfast is not without its drawbacks—a fact which occurred to Spavins and myself almost simultaneously, when Mr. Cellular Tissue rose in great state to propose the health of the bride. A marked change was immediately visible upon the visage of my friend; a horrible spasm passed quite over me. Hitherto I had got on tolerably well with my next neighbour, Miss Ida Toker; we had talked of blighted

existences, ruined hopes, and other cheerful and appropriate matters, and she had repeated to me in a subdued voice the last verses she had written for the *Weekly Witherer*; but from this moment and for some time after I seemed to lose all reasonable consciousness of what I was about. I have an indistinct remembrance of having seen Mr. Cellular Tissue rise slowly and majestically, surrounded, as it appeared to me, by a thick haze, and of hearing him propose, in a series of set phrases, the health of the bride. I have a still less distinct recollection of having seen Spavins rise to reply; *rise* I say wittingly, for having done so, and looked around for a brief space in a state of hopeless bewilderment and despair, he immediately after resumed his seat, without having, so far at least as I could catch, given utterance to a single audible sound. I can just remember that Mr. Rowdydow Riggler, with innate politeness and good feeling, started up to volunteer a speech for him, and having favoured the company with some choice witticisms from the rural districts, wound up by proposing the health of the bridesmaids, and calling upon me to reply, and from that epoch my recollections are horribly vivid.

The instant I heard my name mentioned aloud in connection with the important duty that fell to my lot, my faculties returned to me with all—with ten times their former force. It was not now that I could see but indistinctly what was going on about me, it was that I could see only too plainly. There was I upon my legs alone and prominent, and with all the eyes of that formidable assembly fixed upon me; noises as of the shouts of a thousand maniacs seemed to be ringing in my ears; weights as though of many hundred tons seemed to be attached to either foot; a profuse dew overspread my forehead, and my eyes felt dilated to twice their natural size. Many days before I had prepared this very speech, and had collected from divers sources the proper things to say upon the occasion. At that very moment the result of these lucubrations, neatly written upon two sheets of note-paper, reposed in my left breeches pocket, and thither one hand convulsively sought them, impotent, however, to communicate their contents to me. Vainly did I endeavour to catch even a glimpse of this eloquent effusion; painful were the efforts I made to remove it from its hiding to beneath the table, that I might there possibly cast my eyes down upon it; cruel the contortions that wrung the muscles of my countenance in a vain endeavour to make it assume an assured and lively aspect. It was all to no purpose; the two sheets of note-paper, now crumpled and squeezed into about the consistency of a ball, could not assist me, and everything must be trusted to spontaneous eloquence and innate fancy. With one glance of, oh! what longing to the door, with one deprecatory, half-inarticulate, half-spasmodic cough, I plunged headlong into the streams of rhetoric and metaphor, and in another moment was helplessly floundering about.

At this distance of time I cannot recall with any considerable degree of exactitude the words I used in that memorable speech, but the subject-

matter and accompanying circumstances are fresh as ever in my memory. I commenced with an apology, which was not well received, one of the company distinctly but illogically calling out, "Walker!" I proceeded to mention something about a toast, whereupon Master Riggler elevated a piece upon a fork, a deed which seemed amazingly to tickle Spavins's two youthful medical friends. I made some general observations about marriage and love and young ladies, which went off pretty well; and about this period became aware that Master Riggler had left his place at the end of the table, and stolen behind me, with some object unknown. I introduced some useful reflections proper to the occasion, which were highly approved of by Miss Ida Tucker, but fell rather flat upon the rest; and wound up in correct style by advising all the bridesmaids to get married, and counselling all the bachelors to do the same; after which signally original witticism—decidedly the greatest hit of the speech—I calmly, and with an air of befitting dignity, resumed—resumed my—re—

Ah!—What's this?—Confound it!—I—What?—Bang!—Crash! and I find myself measuring my length upon the floor.

That young scamp Riggler has surreptitiously withdrawn the chair during my oratorical display, and this is the result!

There were no more speeches after that; the catastrophe which succeeded mine acting doubtless as a warning to the rest. After a futile chase after the author of my mishap, and many vows of vengeance, "not loud but deep," I suffered myself to be consoled, satisfying myself with the reflection that if it was my duty to afford merriment to the company, I had certainly succeeded in my office.

Meanwhile the banquet proceeds with great *éclat*, the inroads upon the pies, bitter beer, and other good things being conducted with singular spirit and ability. Liquids of a more potent nature begin to supply the place of the less enlivening, and the result becomes manifest in the increased animation and hilarity of the guests. Spavins's two youthful medical friends now come out in great force, and contribute much to the general amusement. One of them sings a very good song, with a chorus pledging the company under all circumstances to continue "free and easy still;" and the other, who has a talent for imitating the cries of animals, favours us with a selection of cat-calls, cock-crows, pig-grunts, &c., &c., very edifying indeed to hear. Miss Ida Tucker gives us a recitation from "The Betrayed," and Master Riggler, who has got excessively drunk, is carried up to bed, much to the relief of all. The time at length arrives when it is evident that the bride and bridegroom should take their departure, and a general move attests the fact that they are about doing so. A little confusion is here created upon the side of Dr. Hippocampus Major, who is discovered in the act of squeezing the hand of one of the Misses Turnup Swedes beneath the table,—probably with a view to feeling her pulse. The leave-taking is got through in a proper spirit; an ingenious mixture of smiles and tears, of congratulations and regrets, being judi-

ciously supplied, and I accompany my friend to the hall door. The travelling carriage, or rather, travelling cab, for it was of that genus, is there, the driver having mounted a piece of white ribbon on his whip and got partially intoxicated in honour of the occasion; the happy pair take their seats inside, the jarvey cracks his whip, Mr. Rowdydow Riggler suggests three cheers, and Miss Ida Toker shies an old slipper after the receding vehicle, which she has carefully concealed up to that moment. He is off; they are gone; and, like the young Lochinvar, Spavins bears away his bride "from her kinsmen and all."

Some return to the joys of the hospitable table, and some do not. Among the former are Spavins's two young medical friends and Mr. Rowdydow Riggler; and among the latter are Mr. Cellular Tissue, Dr. Hippocampus Major, and myself. That night finds me back again in the "modern Babylon," and the next day labouring under a severe attack of indigestion and an accumulation of sores, wounds, and bruises, the result of Master Riggler's practical joke. Weddings are very good things in their way, I moralize, and so also are wedding breakfasts, though I don't think practical jokes at them are; but in any case it is quite possible to have a little too much of one and all. For the rest, the reader will be glad to learn that I have since heard from my friend Spavins more than once, that he is now a full-fledged surgeon, and that he and Mrs. Spavins, with a mutual appreciation of each other's good qualities, and a mutual allowance for each other's weak points, live very happily and cosily together.

R. W. C. T.

THE LADY'S MILE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ONLY A CLOD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A TIMELY WARNING.

MR. O'BOYNEVILLE enjoyed himself amazingly at Pevenshall. The man whose ordinary existence was one unceasing round of hard work was the most social of creatures when once set free from the daily round of labour. He enjoyed himself with a boisterous boyish delight in simple pleasures, and the Pevenshall visitors found his gaiety contagious. There are some people who succeed in society by mere force of animal spirits, and who are pardoned for solecisms that would be the perdition of a more timid blunderer. Laurence O'Boyneville did what he liked and said what he liked, with the reckless impulsiveness of his nation, and people forgave him and were pleased with him.

He gave himself up so thoroughly to the social delights of Mr. Lobyer's mansion, which was made all the pleasanter by the frequent absence of its master, that he had no leisure for morbid anxieties of a domestic nature. The idea that he had any need to doubt the allegiance of the wife he loved and honoured had never presented itself to him in any shape, howsoever impalpable. She was his wife—a creature so much above suspicion, that only the rudest of awakenings could disturb his perfect confidence in her honour and truth. That he might leave her in one moment bright, beautiful, and smiling, and return in the next to find her dead, was a possibility within his power of conception; but that he could awake from his trust in her to find her false to him was a monstrous impossibility which his mind would have been unable to grasp. So he gave himself up to the pleasure of the hour, and devoted himself to the service of the fair sex with an indiscriminate and laborious gallantry, which the gilded youth fluttering around Mrs. Lobyer, and drawing some subtle half-implied compliment once in the twenty-four hours, beheld with amazement from afar off.

"I had no idea that Mr. O'Boyneville was such a delightful creature," Flo remarked to Cecil. "I hope I shall never again be without an Irishman in the house when I have a large party. That dear, good-tempered husband of yours contrives to keep all the women in good humour. I'm sure that poor Miss Skaircrow had never had a civil word said to her on the subject of her personal appearance till Mr. O'Boyneville told her she was the image of the Empress of the French. He assured Miss Skreechoule that her voice reminded him of Grisi in her prime. And

then there is pretty Mrs. Fitz-Cavendish, the *attaché's* wife, who has been surfeited with admiration, but who declares that there never was such an absurdly delightful creature as your husband."

Cecil acknowledged these praises somewhat coldly. This noisy, frivolous Irishman, whom other people thought so delightful, was no nearer to her than the overworked barrister of Brunswick Square. She was weak enough to feel something like anger against him for his genial good temper—for his utter blindness to her own deadly peril. Hector Gordon had broken his promise. He had stayed at Pevenshall; and in the social intercourse of that pleasant mansion it was impossible for Cecil to avoid his companionship. Nor did Laurence O'Boyneville's presence shield her in any manner from that dangerous association. Serene in perfect confidence, the barrister amused himself noisily at one end of the drawing-room, while Major Gordon talked to his wife at the other.

So perverse is the human heart, that this placid trustfulness offended the woman who was trusted. Cecil resented her husband's confidence as an evidence of indifference, and was angry with him for not being jealous.

"If I had a husband who loved me, he would come between me and my danger," she thought, bitterly; "but my husband does not know what love is."

Unhappily, there was some one at Pevenshall who did know, or who pretended to know, all the mysteries of that fatal passion; some one whose voice sounded very often in Cecil's ear, whose eyes were for ever seeking hers. Heaven knows that she did her best to avoid him; but her best efforts were very weak and futile as compared to the machinery which the Eumenides employed against her. A thousand little circumstances conspired to force her into the society of the man she feared. At races, and picnics, and water-parties, and rustic gatherings of every description, she was always finding Hector Gordon by her side. The old companionship of the Fortinbras time arose again; but now there was always a guilty consciousness, a remorseful agony, lurking amidst the unhallowed happiness; and oh, the meanness, the deception, the grovelling guiltiness, which was the every-day cost of that forbidden joy! Balancing one against the other, Cecil knew how heavily the perpetual remorse outweighed those brief moments of feverish gladness, when the sound of Hector's voice lulled her with its fatal music, and the tender pressure of Hector's hand lifted her above the common earth.

"If I could get away to some quiet hiding-place at the other end of the world, where he *could not* follow me, I might escape him, and be innocent and happy once more," she thought. That escape for which she yearned seemed every day more difficult. The poor frail rudderless bark was hovering on the very brink of a whirlpool, and there was no friendly hand to steer it back to safety. Sometimes Cecil resolved that she would confess everything to her husband, and demand the shelter she needed; but the barrister's good-humoured indifference was more repellant to her

in her present frame of mind than the fiercest severity of a jealous husband could possibly have been. It would have been a relief to her to be suspected. She wanted an occasion to throw herself into her husband's arms, and cry, "Have pity upon my wickedness, and save me from myself!" Perhaps in these latter days, when the chronicles of the Divorce Court furnish such piquant reading for middle-class breakfast-tables, it would be well if husbands were a little more inclined to jealous watchfulness, and somewhat less disposed to believe implicitly in their own invincible claims to all love and duty. More than once had Cecil nerved herself for the ordeal. She had resolved on humiliating herself before the husband whose indifference wounded her; but after waiting for an hour or more in the loneliness of her own apartment until it should please her lord and master to withdraw himself from some social masculine gathering in the smoking-room below—after waiting with the words she meant to speak arranging and rearranging themselves in her brain, the remorseful wife found it impossible to begin her guilty story, and to open her heart to a man who was chuckling over the capital things he had been saying, and who insisted on relating the triumphs he had just achieved in argument.

Against that every-day joviality, that commonplace good humour, the flood-tide of passion dashed impotently, as storm-beaten waters break against a groin of solid masonry. So the days went by, and Mr. O'Boyneville enjoyed himself, while the Fates worked their worst against helpless Cecil, who found herself day by day in more frequent association with the man who loved her, and who persisted in reminding her perpetually of his love.

Pevenshall was very full and very gay. Amidst so many people and so much gaiety flirtations that would have made scandal in a quieter household passed unnoticed, except by a few quiet watchers unengaged by schemes of their own. Sir Nugent Evershed appeared at the York Meeting, where one of his horses ran a bad second for the Great Ebor, and after the races was almost a daily guest at Mr. Lobyer's mansion. The Irish barrister had been some time at Pevenshall when Mrs. MacClaverhouse arrived on a flying visit. She had been visiting further north, and she took Mrs. Lobyer's house on her way homewards, in accordance with an old promise made to Flo, who liked the lively dowager.

"I must only stay with you three or four days at the most, my dear," she said to her hostess; "for I am due in Hampshire next week, at a dear old rectory which is supposed to be haunted; though I must confess the ghosts have never come my way. But there are some people who may spend their lives in tapestried chambers and not see anything out of the common."

Before Mrs. MacClaverhouse had been half a dozen hours at Pevenshall she had taken occasion to interrogate her nephew respecting the sale of his commission. She put him through so sharp an examination that the

Major was fain to confess the existence of motives which it was impossible for him to explain.

"Then they must be bad motives," exclaimed the dowager, "and unworthy of the true-hearted lad I used to be so proud of. You can't suppose that I wished you to go out to Japan to be killed by a herd of horrible creatures with small eyes and pigtailed; but I've heard people speak sneeringly about your sudden selling out, and the malicious wretches have made me feel quite uneasy."

"You needn't be uneasy, my dear aunt," answered Hector. "It's not a case of 'the white feather,' if that's what you mean."

"That's not what I mean, and you know as well as I do that it is not. I don't like those mysterious motives which you can't explain."

The Major shrugged his shoulders with a deprecating gesture. He might give his aunt Indian shawls and ivory caskets, and *carte blanche* upon his wine merchant; but there were secrets which he did not hold himself bound to reveal to that lady. She took his refusal very quietly.

"When people object to tell me things, I generally contrive to find them out for myself," she said, calmly; and from this time, though she enjoyed the delights of Pevenshall to the uttermost, she kept a sharp eye upon her handsome nephew, and an assiduous ear for all floating gossip that accidental breezes wafted in her way.

She stayed a week; and on hearing that Mr. O'Boyneville had occasion to run up to town on the day following her intended departure, she delayed that departure in order to avail herself of his escort.

"I suppose you won't object to take care of an old woman between this and King's Cross, Mr. O'Boyneville," she said, after proposing this arrangement. Of course the barrister declared himself delighted to be of service; but Cecil, who knew her strong-minded kinswoman's independent spirit, was not a little surprised by this sudden desire for masculine protection. Mr. O'Boyneville was only to sleep one night in Brunswick Square, and then go on to the west of England, where he had business of importance to transact for a friend. The affair would not occupy him more than a week, he said, and he should hurry back to Pevenshall directly he was free to do so. Cecil made no objection to this arrangement. It pleased her husband to leave her in order to attend to his business, and she let him go. A strange calmness had taken possession of her during the last few days. She was absent-minded, and frequently answered at random: more than once she had complained of headache, and had kept her room; but when her husband asked her if there was anything serious the matter, and entreated her to see a medical man, she assured him that her illness was only nervous. The dowager visited her on this occasion, and questioned her sharply; but, for the first time in her experience, that worthy matron found herself repulsed by a sullen obstinacy on the part of her niece.

"Your questioning me won't cure my headache," Lady Cecil said;

"believe me, it is much better to let me alone. I am not worth the trouble you take about me."

"But, Cecil, if you are really ill, I must insist upon your having advice; and if you are not ill, this shutting yourself up in your room is very absurd. That dear good O'Boyneville is most uneasy about you."

The stentorian laughter of the dear good O'Boyneville floating upward in the summer air made itself heard at this moment through the open windows. The barrister was enjoying himself on the terrace with the most lively of the Pevenshall visitors.

"Yes; he is very uneasy about me, auntie," said Cecil; "any one can perceive that."

Mrs. MacClaverhouse gave an impatient shrug and departed.

"If I had been your mother in the days when George III. was a young man, and pert chits like you were taught to respect their elders, how soundly I would have boxed those pretty little ears of yours! A sound box on the ear is what you want, Lady Cecil, and I only wish that Laurence O'Boyneville were the man to give it to you."

Thus soliloquized the dowager as she lingered for a few moments at the door of her niece's chamber. She encountered Hector Gordon by-and-bye in the lower regions, and treated him more cavalierly than that favourite of fortune was wont to be treated. He bore her ill-usage very meekly, and carefully avoided the severe glare of those hard gray eyes which had been apt to soften when they looked at him.

On the next morning the dowager and Mr. O'Boyneville took their departure. Cecil bade them adieu in a strange mechanical manner, which the barrister was too busy and too hurried to notice. He did indeed perceive that his wife was paler than usual, and that she drew herself away from him when he would have embraced her at parting; but the pallor was accounted for by the nervous headache, from which she confessed herself still a sufferer; and the chilling refusal of the embrace was attributed to the inconvenient presence of the matched footmen, who were on guard in the hall, and of Mr. and Mrs. Lobyer, who had emerged from the dining-room to speed their parting guests. The generous-minded Othello needs a hint from Iago before he can see flaw or speck in Desdemona's purity, though she may plead never so persistently for Cassio's reinstatement; and the idea that his wife's conduct had any hidden meaning was still far away from Laurence O'Boyneville's mind.

"I shall come back for you in a week, Cecil," he said; and amid the confusion of adieux and good wishes he had no time to perceive his wife's silence.

At the station Mrs. MacClaverhouse suggested that the barrister should secure a compartment for their own special use by the diplomatic administration of a half-crown to the guard.

"I want to have a little quiet talk with you as we go up to town," she said.

Mr. O'Boyneville complied, wondering. At the first junction the branch train melted into an express, which tore Londonwards at the rate of fifty miles an hour; but Mrs. MacClaverhouse and her nephew-in-law had their quiet talk in spite of the ponderous pantings of the giant that was bearing them to their destination; and the quiet talk must needs have been of a very serious nature, for the barrister was as pale as a ghost when he alighted at King's Cross.

He conducted Mrs. MacClaverhouse to a cab nevertheless, and saw her packages and her maid safely bestowed along with her in that vehicle. On bidding her adieu, he bent his head to say something which was not to be heard by the maid.

"I thank you very much," he said,—“very much. I am not afraid. No, Mrs. MacClaverhouse, with God's help, I am not afraid!”

CHAPTER XXX.

“HE'S SWEETEST FRIEND, OR HARDEST FOE.”

WHILE Mr. O'Boyneville was parting with the dowager at the terminus, Cecil walked with Hector Gordon on the terrace at Pevenshall.

The August afternoon was almost stifling in its sultry heat; and most of the Pevenshall idlers had taken shelter in the drawing-room. A group of young ladies were clustered under a great beech on the lawn, listening to the perusal of a new novel; and with the exception of this party and the two promenaders on the terrace, the gardens were deserted.

Cecil and Hector walked slowly up and down the terrace. For some time they had been silent. It was one of those oppressive days which weigh down the liveliest spirits; but on Cecil's face there was a profound melancholy not to be accounted for by atmospheric influences. Nor was the countenance of the Major much brighter of aspect. He seemed divided between his own sombre thoughts and an anxious curiosity as to the meditations of his companion.

“Tell me you are not unhappy, darling,” he said at last; “for pity's sake tell me that the idea of the step you have decided upon taking does not make you unhappy.”

“You do not think that I can feel very happy, do you, Hector?”

“If you loved me as I—”

“Does the thought of our future make *you* happy?” cried Cecil, passionately. “Oh, Hector, you know as well as I do that henceforward happiness must be impossible for you and me. It is agreed that we cannot endure the miserable deception, the shameful degradation of our lives any longer—that we must escape from this atmosphere of falsehood at any sacrifice—at any cost to ourselves. We have discussed this so often that there is no need of further discussion; and you have brought me to see things as you see them. You have wrung a promise from me, and I am

prepared to keep it. But for mercy's sake do not talk to me of happiness."

The soldier ventured no reply to this speech. The gloom deepened upon his countenance as he watched the pale face of his companion. They came to the end of the terrace presently, and paused under the statue of Pomona, as they had done in the moonlight some weeks before. They stood here side by side for some time, she looking straight before her at the drowsy summer landscape, he keeping close watch upon her face.

She had promised to leave her husband with Hector Gordon. She had promised to pass away with him into the outer darkness, beyond the confines of the only world she knew. By what passionate pleading, by what subtle argument, her lover had brought her to accept this course as a fatal necessity, need not be set down here. When a man's infatuation or a man's selfishness overrides his sense of truth and honour, he can find arguments enough to serve him in such a cause. That he loved her was beyond all question; that the penalty involved in his dishonour was scarcely less than the sacrifice to be made by her was also true: but it was no less true that the passion which demanded so cruel a sacrifice was a base and selfish one.

It is difficult to imagine how any woman can arrive at such a decision as that made by Lady Cecil. The descent of Avernus is so gradual a slope, that it is only when the traveller finds himself at the bottom of the gulf that he perceives how terrible has been the rapidity of his progress. Ample opportunity had been given Hector Gordon for the pleading of his wicked cause. The Fates had conspired to assist his evil work; and even when some short-lived pang of self-reproach prompted him to abandon his relentless pursuit, some little circumstance, too insignificant to be remembered, always occurred to strangle the feeble resolution.

Little by little Cecil had learnt to believe that the tie between herself and her husband must needs be broken. She had learnt to believe that the daily and hourly deceptions of the last few weeks constituted a more terrible sin than any open rupture with the man she had sworn to love and honour. The seducer's fatal philosophy had done its work, and she accepted the justice of his reasoning. It was surely better that she should forfeit the place she had no right to hold in her husband's confidence and esteem—better that he should know her for a false wife, an outcast from him and from society, than that he should trust her as a true one while her love and allegiance were really given to another. This was the conviction which had taken possession of Cecil's mind. She was prepared to leave her husband, and abandon her home and station for the fatal protection of a lover; but she had no hope of any future happiness to be won by this terrible sacrifice. She sought only to escape from the daily falsehood that tortured and humiliated her. It was within a very short period that this fatal conviction had taken root in her heart. Before that time she had trusted in her own honour—in Hector Gordon's forbearance

—in her husband's power to save her from herself. But her own sense of honour had been weak to sustain her against a lover's subtle power of reasoning. Hector had shown no forbearance; and her last hope in the protection of her husband had been disappointed by reason of Laurence O'Boyneville's unsympathetic joviality.

Looking at her this afternoon as they stood silently side by side, Hector saw something like despair in the pale still face. It was not a hopeful aspect of affairs for a lover who had sacrificed so much in order to induce the woman he loved to break the bonds that bound her to another man and plight her perjured faith to him. He had won her promise to be his, but she had not promised to be happy; and a chilling sense of terror thrilled through his heart as he fancied that perhaps she had spoken the truth just now, and that henceforward there could be no such thing as happiness for these two who loved each other so dearly. He had not calculated upon this. Cecil might desire only to escape from a miserable present, but Hector had believed in a bright future. What could mar his happiness, if the woman he loved was his companion, his own for ever and for ever? Loss of position, tarnished honour, the memory of a great wrong done to an unsuspecting man—what were these but trifles when weighed in the balance with an all-absorbing love?

The ordeal through which he must needs drag the creature he loved so dearly might indeed be a terrible one; but once passed, the future lay bright and fair before them—a future in which they would be together. But now all at once a new light dawned upon him. He might be happy—for how could he be otherwise than happy with her?—but would she be content? That calm despair in the pale face gave no promise of peace.

"Poor girl, poor girl! it is harder for her than for me," he thought, sadly.

And then presently some brief awakening of conscience impelled him to speak.

"Cecil," he cried, "it is not too late! If you wish to retract—if you repent your promise—"

"No, I will keep my promise. I never can go back to my husband any more. If he loved me—if there were any sympathy between us, he might have saved me from myself, Hector—and from you. Oh, I know how selfish this must sound;—you have sacrificed so much for me—your career—your future—I have learnt to understand the sacrifice since I have heard people wonder why you took such a step. And it was for my sake. No, Hector, I will not break my promise. I should be weak, dishonourable, selfish beyond all measure, if I could break my promise after what it has cost you to win it."

A woman has always more or less inclination for self-sacrifice. Let her once be fully persuaded that it is her duty to throw herself away for the welfare or the pleasure of some one she loves, and she is in hot haste

to take the fatal step that shall hurl her to destruction. Cecil was not a woman who could entertain any hope of happiness from such a course as that which she was about to take. If she could make her lover happy, if she could atone to him in some manner for the foolish sacrifice of his career, she would be content; but no false glamour illumined her miserable pathway. She was going to her destruction—blindly perhaps, but with a full knowledge that there was darkness around her, and that no light could ever shine upon the way she was treading.

Hector talked to her of their plans; and she listened quietly, and acquiesced in all his arrangements. The details of their flight had been settled before to-day. The Major was to leave Pevenshall in the evening by the mail, on pretence of some summons, for which his afternoon letters would furnish the excuse. Cecil was to leave the next morning, in obedience to a letter from her husband. In the way which they were going, there seemed to be nothing but falsehood and deception; but Hector reminded his companion that this was only a brief ordeal, through which they must pass to perfect freedom.

"I know how painful it is for you, darling," the Major said, tenderly; "but in a few days we shall be far away from all this wretchedness, in the dear little Brittany village I have told you of so often, with the mountains behind us, and the sea before, and then we will go on to Italy, and wander from place to place till you come some day to the spot in which you would like to live. And there I will build you the brightest home that a man ever made for his idol."

"But you, Hector—your career, your ambition—"

"My career is finished, and I have no ambition except to be with you."

He had said the same thing a hundred times, in a hundred different fashions; but to-day the tender words could not bring the faintest smile to Cecil's face. She knew that she was about to commit a terrible sin; and she had none of the passionate recklessness which can alone sustain the sinner. A stronger will than her own was carrying her along the fatal pathway, and a perverted sense of honour kept her faithful to the promise which had been extorted from her by her lover's despair. She was like that unhappy knight whose—

"Honour rooted in dishonour stood."

All the details of the flight had been planned by Hector before this afternoon; but he had found some difficulty in explaining them to Cecil. The paltry details seemed more detestable than the sin itself; and the soldier's pride and delicacy alike revolted against the necessities of his position. Yet in due course all had been arranged. Cecil was to go straight to Brunswick Square, there to make hurried preparations for her flight, and to write her farewell letter to her husband, who would have started on his western journey before she left the north. In Brunswick Square she was to see Hector, who would come to her in the course of

the day to assure himself of her safe arrival, and on the following morning they were to meet at the station in time to leave London by the Dover mail. Before Mr. O'Boyneville returned to town they would be far away, and there would be little trace of them left to mark the way by which they had gone.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE BRINK.

MAJOR GORDON left Pevenshall by the mail, and on the following morning Cecil bid adieu to her friend, who was rather inclined to resent her abrupt departure.

"I don't believe a bit in Mr. O'Boyneville's summons," said Flo; "you are tired of us, and you want to go away, Cecil; you are deceiving me just as you deceived me before. However, of course I cannot keep you here against your will; and I can only regret that we have not succeeded in making you happy."

Whereupon Cecil declared that Pevenshall was all that is delightful; and that she should never forget Mrs. Lobyer's kindness and affection. The impulsive Florence would upon this have embraced her friend; but Cecil drew herself away from the embrace.

"Wherever you go, dear, I shall remember you and your goodness," she said; "and oh, Florence, I hope you will be happy."

As the two women stood for a moment holding each other's hands, and looking in each other's faces, Cecil would fain have uttered some word of warning to the friend she never thought to see again. But she remembered what a mockery any warning must seem hereafter from her tainted lips; though who so well as this poor shipwrecked creature, newly foundered on a rock, could tell of the dangers that beset a woman's pathway? Holding Mrs. Lobyer's hands silently in her own, she fancied how her friend would remember that parting when her own name had become a byword and reproach.

"Will she have any pity upon me, I wonder, for the sake of our past friendship; or will she be as merciless as the rest of the world?"

This is what Cecil thought in that parting moment, while her packages were being put in the carriage, and the imperturbable footman attended with her shawls and parasols.

"You will come to us at Christmas," cried Flo.

"I fear not, dear. Good-bye."

Cecil was seated in the carriage in the next minute, waving her hand to Florence and a little group of young ladies who had placed themselves at the hall door to witness her departure. Splendid Pevenshall swam before her in a mist as she looked at that group of light-hearted girls fluttering like a cluster of butterflies in the morning sunshine.

"I shall never again pass the threshold of such a house," she thought.

All through the homeward journey she felt like a traveller in a dream. She sat in a corner of the carriage with her eyes fixed upon the changing landscape; but she saw only a confusion of undulating corn-fields and summer verdure.

She went mechanically through the business of her arrival, and reached Brunswick Square without accident; but the clamour of the London streets sounded in her ears like the booming of a stormy sea.

An unearthly quiet seemed to pervade the Bloomsbury mansion. The respectful Pupkin uttered some faint exclamation of surprise on beholding his mistress; but beyond this Cecil heard neither voice nor sound. She avoided her own apartments while they were being prepared for her reception, and went straight to the drawing-rooms, where everything remained exactly as she had left it five or six weeks before. The birds set up a feeble rejoicing as they recognized their mistress; but she did not approach the window where their cages hung in the London sunshine.

She looked at her watch; her life to-day was a question of hours. She had her packing to accomplish—a painful kind of packing, for it involved the setting aside of every trinket her husband had ever given her. She intended to take with her only the plainest dresses and the absolute necessities of her toilet; she doubted whether even these things could be really hers when once she crossed the threshold of that house. There seemed to be a kind of dishonesty in taking with her the most insignificant trifle that had been bought with Laurence O'Boyneville's money.

There was one task before Lady Cecil even more painful than the preparations for her journey, and that task was the writing of the letter which should tell Mr. O'Boyneville that his wife had decided on leaving him. How could she do it? how could she put her wickedness into words? what could she say to him? "You have never been unkind to me; I have no accusation to bring against you; you have only been unsympathetic; and a man whom I love better than truth and honour has persuaded me to abandon you."

Never in all her life had Cecil suffered such anguish as the writing of that letter cost her. It seemed a cold, hard, cruel letter when it was written, so curtly did it announce her guilty design; but though there was little trace of feeling in the written lines, the slow tears rolled down her pallid cheeks as she wrote, and her hand trembled so violently that it was with difficulty she could make her writing legible.

"O Hector!" she cried, piteously, "if you could know what I suffer for your sake—for your sake!"

Somehow or other the letter was written, sealed, and addressed; and then she sat looking at it in a kind of stupor.

"If it were really not too late—if I dared ask him to release me!" she thought.

But in the next moment she remembered the solemn nature of her promise, the sacrifice her lover had made to win it.

"Oh, no, no, no!" she cried; "it is too late; I am bound to him by my promise."

And then she asked herself whether, if there had been no such promise, she could have remained in that house as Laurence O'Boyneville's wife. She had wronged him so much in word and in thought, that her innocence of deeper and more irrevocable wrong seemed to be of little moment. Could she look in his face without humiliation? Could she accept his confidence without dishonour? No, a thousand times no; and this being so, she was no wife for him.

"Come what may, I must leave my husband," she thought. "Oh, if I could go alone! if I could only go away by myself to some quiet hiding-place, and never be heard of any more!"

She thought this in all sincerity. Her love for the tempter had been in a great measure annihilated by the horror of the temptation. The sense of her guilt was so great an agony, that there was little room in her mind for any other feeling. It seemed as if the current of fate was drifting her along, and that she was no more than a weed carried onward by an impetuous torrent. She knew that destruction lay before her, but she had no power to resist the force of the stream.

After the writing of the letter she sat for some time in a listless attitude, looking vacantly at the envelope with her husband's name upon it. Her head ached with a dull pain, and there was confusion in her thoughts. She could not ponder deliberately upon the step that she was going to take. This inability to think quietly had possessed her ever since she had arrived at the fatal conclusion to which her lover had urged her. She had accepted the doctrine of necessity; she had allowed herself to be persuaded that it was her destiny to do wrong; and once having yielded to this unnatural creed, the false god she had created was stronger than herself, and she became indeed a powerless creature in the hands of fate.

Apollo had spoken; sorrow and shame lay before her, her inevitable portion.

The day crept on, and she knew that with every hour the current that was drifting her gathered new strength. Hector was to devote this day to the settlement of his own affairs; for a man has need to make some little preparation on the eve of an exile that may last his lifetime. The day crept on—a dull sultry day at the close of August;—and still Cecil kept her listless attitude by the table, with her husband's letter lying before her. She knew that she was not to expect any visit from Hector until late in the afternoon, since the business he had to transact would occupy the best part of his day. But though she was lonely and wretched, she felt no eagerness for his coming. What relief or consolation could he bring her? What was he but her accomplice in wrong, with whom

she had plotted a crime, and to whom she was pledged for the due accomplishment of that evil deed?

Amid the many thoughts that succeeded one another in the confusion of her brain there was the thought that guilty wretches who had plotted the details of a murder must feel very much as she felt to-day. She could fancy them, when all had been planned and the hour appointed, waiting in weary idleness for the time to come. She could fancy them watching the slow hands upon the dial, and wishing either that time could come to a dead stop for ever and ever, or that the hour had arrived and the deed were done. The stillness of the house seemed to her like the stillness that precedes death and horror. She fancied her husband coming home from his journey in a day or two, to find the same dull quiet in the house, and his wife's letter waiting for him on the table.

"If he loved me, the blow would kill him," she thought; "but he does not love me. His profession is all the world to him. If he had loved me, I think it would have been easy for me to confess my wickedness and ask his forgiveness. He will be sorry, perhaps—more sorry for me than for himself,—but his grief will not last long. He will have Westminster Hall, and his hope of getting into Parliament. He is not like Hector; he would never have allowed his love for me to interfere with his career."

It was nearly five o'clock when she roused herself from this miserable apathy, and went to her room to begin her preparations for to-morrow's flight. She was to dine at half-past six, so she had brief leisure for her work. One by one she set aside the jewels that her husband had given her. They were not very numerous, but they were valuable, and in a simple taste that did credit to Mr. O'Boyneville's judgment.

Like that wretched wife in Kotzebue's tragedy, Lady Cecil could not fail to remember the occasion on which each gift had been presented. The emerald-and-diamond bracelet on her birthday; the cameos in Etruscan setting on the anniversary of her marriage; the suite of turquoise rings and bracelets in solid bands of lustreless gold, bestowed upon her in commemoration of some professional triumph of Mr. O'Boyneville's, as grand in its way as Erskine's defence of Hardy. The thought of her husband's quiet pleasure in these offerings came back to her as she touched them.

"I think he must have loved me then," she murmured, as she remembered the evening on which he had taken the case of cameos from his pocket to lay it on the little table by which she sat at work. He had loved her a little at that time, she thought; he had loved her a little when he sought her as his wife; but always with that moderate and negative affection for which alone there is room in the breast of a man who devotes himself to an arduous profession. It had not been given to Cecil to understand the possibility of hidden fires burning steadily beneath the dull outward crust of the working man's nature. She did not know the capacity for deep and passionate feeling which may exist in the nature of a man

whose daily labour leaves him no leisure for the revelation of the better and brighter part of his mind. She had expected to find a husband only an improved edition of a lover, and finding him something altogether different—a creature who accepted her affection as a matter of course, and was disagreeably candid on the subject of an unbecoming bonnet—she concluded all at once that she was no longer beloved, and that her life was desolate.

The dismal dinner-hour had arrived by the time she had collected the trinkets in her jewel-case, and had packed two or three dresses and her most indispensable possessions in the one trunk which she was to take with her. She went to the dining-room, and made a miserable pretence of dining, with the inestimable Pupkin in attendance, and the evening sunlight shining into the dingy pictures on the wall opposite to her. Everything in Brunswick Square looked unspeakably dull and faded and dusty after the splendour of Pevenshall. She thought of the moonlit terrace, and the fair summer landscape sanctified by the night. The very tones of Hector Gordon's passionate pleading came back to her ears, but they moved her with no answering thrill of passion; her love had perished in the misery which it had brought upon her. She thought of that little village in Brittany which he had described to her so eloquently; the rustic retreat in which they were to spend the first few months of their union—O God, what a union! A vague horror was mingled even with the thought of that pine-clad mountain and the purple sea. Her lover had dwelt so fondly on the beauty of the scene, and yet in Brunswick Square, with the summer sunshine coming to her on a slanting column of dust, and with a street organ droning in the distance, she thought of that far-away paradise with a shudder. In this crisis of her fate she felt like a creature standing between two lives—the dull slow river of commonplace existence, the stormy ocean of passion and guilt. She looked backward to the river with a vague yearning, she looked forward to the ocean with an unutterable fear.

The shadowy banquet occupied less than half an hour, and it was only seven o'clock when Cecil went back to the drawing-room. Seven: he would be with her soon! He too would have made his pretence of dining, no doubt, at one of his clubs. The crisis in a well-bred man's fate must be desperate indeed when he abandons that pretence of dining, or faces the universe with a reckless toilet. Seven. The windows were open; the canaries were making a discordant scraping with their beaks against the wires of the cages, and noisy children were emerging from the square. Cecil looked down at them from her window, and remembered the stories she had heard of women who had run away from such households as those. She remembered one especial history,—the wretched story of a woman who abandoned her husband and children under the influence of an infatuation which remained an unsolvable mystery to the last. It was from Brighton that the hapless creature took flight, and she told one of

the few friends who remained to her after that time how at the last, just as she had crossed the threshold of her husband's house, she heard, or fancied that she heard, a cry from one of her children, and would have gone back—would at that ultimate moment have repented and returned—if a cruel wind had not closed the door in her face, and set the seal upon her doom! She had not the courage to ring the bell. She went away to keep her tryst with the man who had made himself her master, and to have her name a byword and a reproach for ever after that fatal day.

The wheels of an impetuous hansom ground against the kerbstone while Lady Cecil stood at the window thinking of this dismal story, and her lover alighted from the vehicle. He stopped to pay the driver—he must have paid the driver even if he had been going to assist in the execution of a murder,—and the man drove away slowly through the smoky summer gloaming, contented with his fare.

Cecil was still standing by the window when Pupkin announced Major Gordon: she turned her head and waited for her lover; and even in that moment of waiting, as he came towards her through the twilight room, she thought how different would have been her greeting of him if she had been his wife—if she had any right to be glad of his coming.

"My own darling!" said Hector, in a low, tender voice.

She gave him her hand in silence, and he stood by her side in the window, holding the poor cold hand, and looking down at her with unutterable affection.

"My own dear girl, how pale you are in this dim light! I hope it is the light, and that you are not really looking so ill as I fancy you look. I have done everything, dear. I have seen the lawyers, the bankers, the stockbrokers—everybody, and am free to go to the end of the world—to the very end of the world! Look up, darling; let me see the face I used to dream of on my way back to India, after our parting at Fortinbras."

She lifted her head from its drooping attitude, and looked at him with a countenance in which there was a mournful resignation that sent a chill to his heart.

"O my darling, if you could only look forward as happily to our future as I do! I know that there is much for you to suffer—just at first; but when once we are clear of England, and all the brightest countries in the universe are before us, the miserable past will fade away like a dream."

"Do you think so, Hector? Shall I ever forget—shall I ever forget?"

"Let it be considered my fault if you remember. I charge myself with the happiness of your life. You cannot blame me too bitterly if you are unhappy. And now, darling, let us discuss our plans for the last time. I hope they won't bring us lights. It is so nice to sit in this dreamy twilight. I shall always think tenderly of Brunswick Square for the sake of this one evening, Cecil."

They sat by the open window, and Hector talked about the future.

He talked about the future, which, by his showing, was to be one long idyl; and while he talked, the woman who sat by his side would fain have cast herself at his feet, crying,—

“Release me from my guilty promise! Have pity upon me, and set me free.”

She would fain have done this; but she sat by his side, and listened quietly to hopeful words that jarred strangely with the dull anguish which had possessed her all through the long, wretched day.

They were still sitting in the summer dusk, when a firmer footstep than Pupkin's sounded on the landing-place, and the door suddenly opened.

“Laurence!” cried Cecil, starting to her feet as she recognized the stalwart figure in the doorway.

It was indeed Mr. O'Boyneville, with the dust of travel upon him. He took his wife in his arms and kissed her tenderly; and he gave friendly greeting to Major Gordon, but he did not offer his hand to that gentleman.

“Pupkin told me of your return,” he said to Cecil. “What brought you back so unexpectedly?”

It was some moments before Cecil answered, and even then she could not reply without hesitation.

“I was so tired of Pevenshall.”

“Tired of Pevenshall! I thought you were enjoying yourself so much there. Well, dear, you were quite right to come back if you were tired. Let us have the lights, and some tea.”

The barrister went to the fireplace to ring one of the bells. He happened to choose the bell nearest that angle of the chimney-piece on which Cecil had placed two sealed envelopes addressed to her husband. One contained the letter announcing her flight; the other the key of her jewel-case and wardrobe. Mr. O'Boyneville's piercing gaze alighted on these letters as he rang the bell.

“For me?” he asked, advancing his hand towards the two packets.

“No!” Cecil cried, eagerly; “they are mine.”

She snatched them from the mantelpiece and put them in her pocket, and then she seated herself by the table on which she was wont to make tea. Mr. O'Boyneville walked slowly up and down the room. Major Gordon kept his place by the open window. Nothing could be more inconvenient than this unlooked-for return of the barrister, which in all probability would interfere with the arrangements of the next day. The Major felt all the degradation of his position, but was determined to hold his ground nevertheless. The barrister would most likely retire to his study directly after tea, and thereby afford Hector the opportunity of speaking to Cecil before he left. There was an unspeakable dreariness, a palpable desolation in that Bloomsbury drawing-room, which oppressed Hector Gordon as he stood by the window, looking sometimes out into the

square where the lamps burned dimly in the gray evening light, sometimes into the dusky room, where the barrister's figure loomed large athwart the shadows. Cecil sat in a listless attitude, waiting to perform that simple household duty which must seem such a mockery to her to-night. The lamps came presently, and the big plated tea-tray, and old-fashioned urn, with impossible lion-heads holding rings in their mouths. The light of the lamps was painfully dazzling to her aching eyes. She began to pour out the tea mechanically, and the two men came to the table to take their cups from her hands. As they stood side by side doing this the thought arose in her mind of that one treason which stands alone amongst all the treasons of mankind; and the figure of her lover bending over the cups and saucers blended itself horribly with the image of Judas Iscariot dipping his hand into the dish.

Mr. O'Boyneville drank his tea after his usual absent-minded fashion, staring into space as he slowly sipped the beverage. He rose after emptying his second cup, and began to pace the room again, while Hector sat near the lamplit table watching Cecil with anxious, earnest eyes.

"You scarcely expected me to-night, I suppose, Cecil," said the barrister.

"No, I did not expect you."

"I didn't think I should return so soon; but the business I am involved in just now is a very serious one."

"Indeed!"

She spoke mechanically, feeling herself called upon to speak. Hector did not even affect any interest in Mr. O'Boyneville's conversation. A kind of sullenness had taken possession of him since the barrister's entrance; and he kept his place silently with a dogged determination to remain, knowing all the time that he had no right to be there, and that Cecil's husband had good reason to wonder at his presence.

"Yes; it is a very unpleasant business,—a painful business. Of course I have only to consider the technicalities involved in it. I am consulted on a question that has arisen respecting a marriage settlement; but when people want a counsel's opinion, they are obliged to tell him other things besides technicalities. I am very sorry for the poor woman."

"What poor woman?" asked Cecil, still because she felt herself obliged to appear interested.

"The poor deluded creature who has left her husband."

If a thunderbolt had suddenly fallen through the roof of Mr. O'Boyneville's house, Cecil could scarcely have experienced a greater shock; but she gave no utterance to her feelings. She sat pale and motionless, like some unhappy wretch at a bar of justice waiting the awful sentence.

"Ah, I forgot," said the barrister; "you don't know the story. As I said just now, it's not a pleasant story, and perhaps I ought not to talk to you about it; but I can't get it out of my head. And yet it's com-

mon enough, Heaven knows; only it seems a little worse in this case than usual, for the husband and wife had lived so happily together."

"Why did she leave him?"

This time it seemed to Cecil as if some unknown force within her compelled the question, so painful was the nature of her husband's conversation, so unwilling would she have been to continue it had she possessed the power of bringing it to an end.

"Why did she leave him?" repeated the barrister. "Who can tell? There are women in Bethlehem Hospital who believe themselves to be queens of England, and there are miserable creatures in the same asylum who have murdered families of helpless children in sudden paroxysms of madness; but not one amongst them all could seem to me more utterly mad than this woman."

"You know the husband?" said Hector Gordon. He had risen during the barrister's discourse, and was standing by the mantelpiece. He felt himself in a manner called upon to take some part in this discussion, and to defend the sinners if necessary.

"Yes, I know the husband."

"Was he so very devoted to his wife?"

"I am not quite sure of your idea of devotion. You see, you are a club man, Major Gordon; you belong to the West End, and to a set of men who can afford to be what you call 'devoted.' I don't suppose you could realize the idea of a stockbroker's affection for his wife. Your City man has very little opportunity for playing the ideal lover or the ideal husband. His wife's image may be with him even on 'Change. The details of his business are dry and dull and sordid in the eyes of other people; but he may be working for his wife all the time, and his existence may be more completely consecrated to her welfare and to her happiness than if he dawdled by her side all day on the margin of some romantic Italian lake, and only opened his lips to protest the singleness of his affection. Yes, Major Gordon, the City man's devotion is the nobler; for it takes the form of unremitting toil and unending care, while the dawdler's love is only a shallow pretext for a sensuous laziness amidst beautiful scenery."

"I confess myself sceptical on the subject of your stockbroking omeo," said Hector, with a sneer. "With that sort of man a wife is only a superior kind of housekeeper. I don't believe in the poetry of Bartholomew Lane. Your City man works hard because money-making is his habit, his vice, like dram-drinking; not because he wants to make a fortune for his wife and children."

"You think so?"

"Most assuredly I think so."

"And you do not believe that your hard-working man has his own bright picture of an ideal home always before his mind? I don't think you can have studied the habits of Englishmen, Major Gordon, or you would understand the City man better. Look about you, and behold the

incarnation of English prosperity in the Englishman's home. It is for that he works. It is in order to achieve that luxurious haven that he wastes the best years of his life in the smoke and dust and heat and turmoil of the commercial battle-ground. And what does his home represent, with all its splendour of pictures and furniture, and gardens and stables, but his devotion to his wife and children? Build what palace he may, his clubs will give him better rooms than he can build for himself. Whatever salary he pays his cook, there will be better cooks at the Reform or the London Tavern. But the hard-working Englishman wants a home; a dining-room in which his children may gather around him as he sips his famous claret; a drawing-room where, amidst all the splendour, there will be a corner for his wife's work-basket, a hiding-place for his baby's last new toy. And you elegant drones of the West End see this poor working bee—this dust-begrimed money-grub,—and you say such a creature cannot know what it is to love his wife; and if the wife happens to be a pretty woman, you have neither pity nor respect for the husband. Poor, miserable, money-earning machine, what is he that he should be pitied or respected? It can be no sin to bring ruin and desolation upon such a creature's home."

"You are eloquent to-night, Mr. O'Boyneville."

"Oh, you know it is my trade to be eloquent about other people's business. I really do feel for this poor man. I have been in his house to-day: such a house—I could have fancied there had been a funeral, and that the coffin had only just been taken away; there was such palpable desolation in the place."

"And the husband," asked Cecil, with real interest this time, "was he sorry?"

"Sorry! Can you fancy the sorrow for a loss which is so much worse than death that it would be happiness to the mourner if he could awake from a dream to find his wife's coffin by his side? Sorry! Do you know what a broken life is? I do, Cecil. There are three lives ruined and broken by a woman's folly."

"Let the man who loves her bear the full burden of his guilt," said Hector, eagerly. "Let him be responsible for the issue."

"God help him, poor creature!" cried the barrister.

"You pity him?"

"How can I help pitying him? You read of such a case in the papers, and think, perhaps, that the seducer is a fine fellow. He has persuaded a silly woman to make her name a public disgrace, and he has destroyed an honest man's existence. All that sounds very heroic. People wonder what diabolical charm the villain possessed. There are piquant paragraphs about him in the papers,—a social leader holding him up to the execration of the million, but with a little flourish of poetry and passion for his glorification notwithstanding; and if his photograph could be published while his misdeeds had the gloss of novelty upon them, it

would sell by thousands. But have you ever thought about the lives of these people after the nine days' wonder is over, and they slip out of the public mind? Then comes the chastisement; then comes the old classic retribution—evil for evil, evil for evil. The man who did not scruple to destroy the entire scheme of another man's existence finds his own life wasted and broken. What is the universe for him henceforward?—a solitude, with the one wretched creature whom he has chosen for his companion."

"There can be no such thing as solitude with the woman he loves."

"The man who outrages honour and defies society will find his home something worse than a solitude—a prison, in which two galley-slaves pace to and fro, dragging at the hateful chain that links them together. Let the seducer love his victim never so fondly, the time too surely comes in which he learns to hate her; the time comes when the voice of a forgotten ambition reminds him how much he has sacrificed—for what? for the pale face of a penitent, whose wan eyes are filled with involuntary tears at the sight of the humblest peasant woman walking by her husband's side."

"A man must be a dastard who could count any sacrifice made for the woman he loves," said the Major.

"The man who steals another man's wife is a dastard," answered Mr. O'Boyneville. "Sooner or later he will count the cost of his folly; and the woman who has staked her salvation against the love of this one creature will awake some day to find that the game is lost. She will see the reflection of her own remorse in her lover's face, blended with something worse than remorse. She will watch his dreary, purposeless life, spent in a foreign country, under a false name most likely; and she will think what he might have been but for her. Heaven help her! She must have a servile love of life for its own sake if she does not creep quietly from the house some dusky evening to drown herself in the nearest river. Nothing but her death can set her lover free; and even her death cannot extinguish the disgrace she has inflicted on her husband's name."

A half-stifled sob sounded through the room as the barrister came to a full stop. He went to his wife, and found her crying, with her hands clasped before her face.

"Forgive me, my dear," he said, gently; "I forgot that this sort of story was not the thing to speak of before you. I let myself talk as if I were in court.—Why are you going away, Major? my wife will be better presently. We won't say anything more about these miserable runaways.—Look up, Cecil. There, you are all right now.—Must you really go?"

This question was addressed to Hector, who had taken up his hat, and was waiting to make his adieux.

"Yes, it is ten o'clock. I will call upon Lady Cecil to-morrow. I—I have something particular to say to her."

"Then I'm afraid you must defer the something particular for a week or two. I am going to take my wife to Devonshire by an early train

to-morrow. Good night;—but I'm coming down to my study, so I can let you out myself."

"Good night, Lady Cecil."

"Good night."

The words were scarcely audible. She rose as she gave him her hand, and they stood for a few moments face to face, while Mr. O'Boyneville walked towards the door; Hector mutely imploring some sign, Cecil looking at him with a blank, stupefied expression. To leave her thus, and on such a night—the night which was to have been the eve of a new life—was unspeakable anguish. But he had no alternative: the barrister's eye was upon him; and a word, a look, might have betrayed the woman he loved. He had no opportunity to ascertain whether to-morrow's appointment at the railway station was to be kept, or whether Mr. O'Boyneville's return was to hinder Cecil's flight. He could only take his departure after the fashion of the most commonplace visitor, and must trust all to-morrow's schemes and to-morrow's hopes to the chapter of accidents.

"Good night, Lady Cecil," he repeated; and he tried to put as much meaning into those two words as can be infused into any two syllables of the English language.

Mr. O'Boyneville conducted his guest to the street door, and lingered on the threshold with him for a few moments talking pleasantly.

"You really think of going to the west of England to-morrow?" asked the Major. There is no such thing as honour when man is engaged in a dishonourable cause; and not being able to talk to the wife, Hector Gordon was fain to extract the information he required from the husband.

"Yes," answered Mr. O'Boyneville; "I have business in that part of the country; and as my wife is not looking well, I shall take her with me. A week or two at Cloverly, or some sea-coast village, will set her up."

"Shall you start early?"

"Yes, by the eight o'clock train."

Half-past eight was the hour for the Dover mail, and at a quarter past Cecil and Hector were to have met at the station. All had been planned by the Major. She was to have told her servants that she was going to Hampshire to join her aunt, and was to have ordered a hack-cab to take her to the station. All had been thought of; but now delay was inevitable, and Hector had a presentiment that in this case delay meant the ruin of his hopes. He bade good night to the barrister, and went away from the quiet Bloomsbury quarter with a heavy heart.

Mr. O'Boyneville smiled as he closed the door upon the departing visitor. "Thank God it's all over quietly!" he muttered to himself. "It was best to take matters coolly. It would always have been open to me to blow his brains out."

The barrister did not go to his study: he went back to the drawing-

room, where he found his wife lying prostrate on the spot where Hector Gordon had bade her adieu. He lifted her in his arms, and carried her up-stairs as easily as if she had been an infant.

He rang for one of the maids to attend on his unconscious wife; but before doing so, and before making any effort to restore Cecil from her fit, he deliberately picked her pocket of the two letters which she had taken from the mantelpiece. Rapid as her movement had been when she took possession of these two packets, the barrister's piercing glances had discovered that they were addressed to himself.

"It's better that I should have them than any one else," he said, as he transferred the letters to his own pocket.

He left Cecil in the care of the housemaid, and sent for a medical man who had occasionally attended his wife. All that night he sat by Cecil's bedside, and through the greater part of the next day he still kept his post. There was no journey to Devonshire; and Hector Gordon, calling day by day in Brunswick Square, with a desperate defiance of appearances, was apt to find a doctor's brougham standing at the door, and for some time received an invariable answer from Pupkin—"Lady Cecil O'Boyneville was still very ill."

It was a long wearisome illness; a low fever, with frequent delirium, and a most terrible languor of mind and body. But slow and wearisome as the malady was in its nature, Laurence O'Boyneville knew no such thing as fatigue. He nursed his wife as tenderly as ever mother nursed her fading child; snatching his broken sleep or his hasty meal how and where he could, and carrying a bagful of books for the coming term to the sick chamber, there to read and ponder in the dead of the night, with ears always on the alert for the faintest variation in the low breathing of the beloved sleeper, and with his watch open before him to mark the hour when medicines were to be administered. The hired nurse, who performed the commoner duties of the sick chamber, snored peacefully in Cecil's dressing-room during the dismal night-watch, and was loud in her praises of the husband's devotion,—“which if there was more like him, our dooties wouldn't be that wearin' as they are, and there'd be less complaints of givin' way to stimulants; and gentlemen which should be above blackenin' a pore woman's character would have no call to throw their Sairy Gampses and Betsy Prigses in a lone female's face,” said this member of the Gamp species.

ON LONDON BRIDGE.

"Our lives are rivers rolling free
To that unfathomable sea,
The silent grave."

MOAN it is, the crowd is thickening,
And the pulse of life is quickening
In the veins of London town.
On the Bridge I take my station,
Fittest post for observation,
Towards the river looking down.

Most frequented place of places,
What a mass of eager faces,
Restless flittings to and fro!
Each more anxious than his neighbour,
Mortals aye must fret and labour,
While the murky Thames doth flow.

Placid stream, whose tranquil motion
From the mountain to the ocean
Smiles in irony on life;
Let me, wrapp'd in contemplation,
Steal a moment's relaxation
From the turmoil of the strife.

Where thy pebbly bed is narrow,
Where thou flow'st by peak and barrow,
There my infant years were spent.
There I wander'd single-hearted,
Thou and I were never parted,
By thy banks my steps were bent.

Onwards rolls thy stream defiant;
I a pigmy, thou a giant;
Freemen both of London town.
Think'st not, Thames, by culture stainèd,
Purer we had both remainèd,
Thou a brook and I a clown?

Life is progress, progress ever ;
Better a polluted river,
 Bearing commerce on its breast,
Than a rill all vain and silly,
Minnow's home and water-lily,
 Otter's haunt and moor-hen's nest.

Better lead a life of action,
Vanquish slander and detraction,
 True to duty and to God,
Than ignobly shrink from trouble ;
Drive the team, or pare the stubble,
 Soulless, like a sentient sod.

Nought distracts and nought appals thee ;
From its depth the ocean calls thee :
 Thou and I are close allied.
Be my sphere like thine extending ;
Thou thy aid a kinsman lending,
 Spread my musings far and wide.

Idle the conceit I reckon ;
See the busy present beckon,—
 Iron age in which we dwell.
Brief the respite is for dreaming,
Denser crowds are round me streaming :—
 Ancient neighbour, fare thee well.

R. C.

CONCERNING BEDS AND BEDSTEADS.

THE person who has commenced to read this paper is particularly requested by the writer not to proceed with the reading unless he or she happen to be in bed ; for if the paper be read in any place other than a bed, half the enjoyment of it will be lost to the reader. Try it, my friend, in your four-poster, French, Arabian, tent, or as the case may be, while you are having your breakfast there, after the manner of that lazy Mr. Sala, who spends most of his time in bed, as you are aware ; and if you do not find the mental sensations induced thereby truly agreeable, throw this Magazine out of your reach, take forty winks, and forget this historiette of your dormitory. But we (always remembering the daily invocation of the weaver of Kilmarnock, "The Lord gie us a gude conceit of oursels") venture to state that you will not have occasion to do that.

We shall have to dive far into the "abysme of time" in order to discover when the articles of domestic comfort now called beds and bedsteads first came into use. The word bed (Saxon, *bedde*; Belgic, *bett*; Teutonic, *bett*) has been defined as the name of something made to sleep on ; and the stead is the frame of a bed. In the first ages of mankind our mother earth was that something, and the great globe itself was that frame. Then the common practice was to sleep upon the skins of beasts ; and this was the custom among the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, and the ancient Britons. It prevailed even until comparatively modern times among the common people in certain parts of Germany, and has not yet died out in the remote and uncivilized plains of the world. These skins, some of which formed portions of the sleepers' daily clothing, were spread at night on the floors of their habitations, and thus made the first rude and primitive beds. In course of time the skins were changed for loose rushes, dried herbs, and afterwards for straw, spread upon the ground. As civilization advanced, beds were raised from the earth on to frames or pedestals with feet. This custom appears to have anciently prevailed in the East, and to have been from thence introduced into Europe.

In the heroic ages of Greece beds were very simple ; but bedsteads were elaborated, and much decorated, as Homer in his "Iliad" and "Odyssey" tells us. In the latter he says,—

"The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins :
And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.
I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ;
Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,
And bore it regular, from space to space :
Athwart the frame, at equal distance lie
Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye ;
Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mould
With silver shone, with elephant, and gold."

This description gives us mother-of-pearl, marble, choice wood, stained leather, silver, ivory, and gold, as the components of a royal bedstead in the early days of Greece.

The beds of the Grecians appear to have been at one time the thick woollen cloaks which were worn by the men, and were sometimes spread over seats to render them soft. These served as blankets for persons in their sleep, as did also other such articles of softer and more costly kinds of woollen cloth, varied according to the rank of the owner. To render this thick stuff more agreeable, linen sheets were sometimes covered over it:—

“Soft painted robes they spread,
With linen cover’d, for the hero’s bed.”

It seems doubtful whether pillows were used in the Homeric age. Persons of high rank had their bedsteads covered with skins, upon which the woollen cloaks and sheets were placed; and over these carpets were spread. Such a bed did Helen prepare for her lord:—

“Beneath an ample portico they spread
The downy fleece to form the slumberous bed;
And o’er soft palls of purple grain unfold
Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold.”

These soft and elegant sleeping-wraps were represented in the poor Greek’s home by ruder materials. Homer tells us that the bed of a herdsman was composed of the fleecy spoils of sheep, and a goat’s rough hide; to which was added a wide and thick mantle. In reference to the misery of Ulysses we are told that—

“No costly carpets raise his hoary head,
No rich embroidery shines to grace his bed;
Ev’n when keen winter freezes in the skies,
Rank’d with his slaves, on earth the monarch lies.”

These simple beds, to which soon after the Homeric age a pillow for the head was added, continued to be used among the poorer classes of the Greeks at all times. The bed of the orator Lycurgus is said to have consisted of only one sheepskin and a pillow. After bedsteads came into fashion among the indigent class, including poor citizens, slaves, and soldiers, the straw and dry herbs then in use for beds gave place to mattresses, or mats, made of rushes or bast, which were placed on low frames, distinguishable from the high bedsteads of the upper classes.

A Grecian bedstead in its developed form seems to have consisted of posts fitted into each other, and resting upon four feet. At the head there was generally a board to support the pillow, and to prevent it from falling out; and sometimes a board was fixed at the bottom of the bedstead. This frame was most frequently made of wood, the quality of which varied according to the circumstances of the person to whom it belonged. Sometimes it was made of solid maple or boxwood; and

at others it was only veneered with such-like costly woods. Occasionally bedsteads were made of solid ivory, or coated on the outside with tortoise-shell; and had silver feet. The bedstead was furnished with girths of leather, by which the mattress or bed was supported; but the poor folks used string for girths. The mattress was usually filled with wool or dried herbs, and covered with linen, or woollen cloth, or leather. Beside a round pillow for the head, occasionally two square pillows were used to support the back of the sleeper. The covers of these pillows were striped in colours. The bedding, such as the blankets and counterpanes, was generally made of cloth, which was very thick and woolly, and often was of the most costly workmanship. Carthage, Corinth, and Miletus, were the places most celebrated for the manufacture of splendid bedcovers. It seems that although the Greeks wore night-dresses, they wrapped themselves in, as well as covered themselves with, their bedclothes. Notwithstanding the splendour and comfort of many of their beds, the luxurious Asiatics said that the Greeks did not know how to make an enjoyable bed.

The Romans had various kinds of beds, as their *lectus cubicularis*, or chamber bed, on which they slept; their *lectus discubitorius*, or table bed, on which they took their meals in a recumbent posture; their *lectus lucubratorius*, on which they studied; their *lectus funebriis*, on which the dead was carried to the pile; and their *lectus genialis*, or bridal bed.

The beds of the Romans in the early days of the Republic were of the same description as those used in Greece; but towards the end of it, and during the Empire, when Italy acquired a taste for the luxuries of Asia, the richness and magnificence of the beds of wealthy Romans far exceeded those used by the Greeks, splendid though they were. There was scarcely any difference between the sleeping beds of the ancients and their couches, except that the latter, being made for appearance as well as for comfort, were more beautiful and costly than the former. There were usually three persons to one bed or couch, the middle place in which was considered to be the most honourable. These beds were unknown before the second Punic war. Until then the Romans sat down to eat on plain wooden benches, after the manner of the heroes of Homer, and, as Varro says, the Lacedæmonians and Cretans. Scipio Africanus is said to have first brought from Carthage some of the little beds called Punicani or Archaia, which were very low, made of wood, stuffed with straw, or the like, and covered with the skins of sheep or goats. The comfort of these beds differed little from that of the wooden benches which they supplanted; but with them came the fashion among men of reclining instead of sitting at meals. The Roman ladies modestly adhered to the old custom during the time of the Commonwealth; but after the period of the first Cæsars they too ate on their beds. Before the youth put on his *toga virilis* he was kept to the ancient rule as to seats; and when he was admitted to table he sat on the edge of the beds of his relatives. Suetonius tells us that the young Cæsars, Caius and Lucius, did not eat at the table

of Augustus ; but they were set "in imo loco," or, as Tacitus says, "*ad lecti fulcra*."

From the simple pieces of furniture which we have above described, the dining beds of the Romans were elaborated into most magnificent articles of decoration. Pliny tells us that they were sometimes covered with plates of silver, and adorned with the softest of mats and the richest of counterpanes. Sampridius says that Heliogabalus had beds of solid silver ; and Pompey on his third triumph introduced beds of gold.

The sleeping bed of the Romans was generally rather high, so that persons entered it by means of steps. The bedstead was sometimes made of metal, and at others of valuable wood, or veneered with ivory or tortoiseshell ; and frequently it rested on feet of silver or gold. The horizontal sideposts were connected by girths or strings, upon which the mattress or bed rested. In beds intended to be used by two persons the sides were distinguished by different names ; the side at which the sleepers entered was open, and was called *sponda* ; the other side was protected by a board, and was called *pluteus*. The sides of such a bed had two names—*torus exterior* and *torus interior*, or *sponda exterior* and *sponda interior*,—from which expressions we may infer that two beds or mattresses were used, one for each person. The mattresses were in early times filled with dried herbs or straw ; but in later times the beds and pillows of the wealthy Romans were composed of wool, and still later of feathers. Those of the inns were stuffed with the soft down of reeds, as Pliny tells us. The blankets or counterpanes and pillow-casings used by the upper classes were of a most rich description, and mostly of a purple colour, and embroidered with gold. Bedcoverings of this kind were called *peripetasmata Attalica*, because they were first used at the court of Attalus. It seems doubtful whether curtains or canopies were used in the *lectus cubicularis*, but probably they were occasionally employed.

The substratum of a Jewish bed in the early days was only a mat, or one or more quilts ; and the covering was a quilt of finer quality than these ; but in hot weather a light material was used ; and oftentimes the poor Jews made some of their daily garments their night coverings, and slept without bedsteads. Hence the law provided that the outer apparel should not be kept in pledge after sunset, that the owner might not be without his necessary covering for night : "And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge : in any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee" (Deut. xxiv. 12, 13). The pillows were formed of a fabric of woven or plaited goat's-hair. We are told that "Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth" (1 Sam. xix. 13). Pillows formed of the fleeces of sheep or the skins of goats, with a stuffing of cotton, are until this day common in the East. Jacob saw the vision of the ladder with stones for his pillow ; and probably such a rude resting-

place for the head, covered with a garment, was common among the poor classes of his people, many of whom were herdsmen and shepherds. Before Christ stilled the tempest on the sea "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow" (Mark iv. 38).

Oriental apartments were commonly provided with fixed platforms or divans along the sides, or at the end; which were used in the daytime as seats, and at night for the support of the beds; therefore frequently portable bedsteads were not required. However, we find that they were sometimes used. The Shunammite woman prepared for Elisha a little chamber, and "set for him there a bed" (2 Kings iv. 10). And in the last sickness of Jacob he "bowed himself upon the bed's head" (Gen. xlvii. 31). The image which Michal prepared as above mentioned was put into a portable bedstead, as appears from the fact that Saul sent messengers to order David, whom the image personated, to be brought to him in the bed (1 Sam. xix. 15). The body of Abner was placed on a portable bed or bier (2 Sam. iii. 31). At the great and sumptuous feast given by Ahasuerus, the details of which vividly bring before us the magnificence of Eastern customs, the couches on which the guests reclined were beds of gold and silver (Est. i. 6). The bedstead of the giant Og was of iron; "nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it" (Deut. iii. 11). Nine cubits were equal to thirteen feet and a half of English measurement. Bedsteads were sometimes highly luxurious and ornamental, having finely wrought pillars, canopies, ivory carvings, adornments of gold, silver, and mosaic work, and hangings of purple and fine linen. We read of a bed which was decked "with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt," and also was perfumed with sweet spices (Prov. vii. 16, 17); and we are told that the Israelites in their self-indulgent wantonness used to recline upon beds of ivory (Amos vi. 4).

The ancient Egyptians used bedsteads which had rests for the head, commonly of wood, similar to those now employed by the Chinese and Japanese.

The time when beds and bedsteads, as they are now known, were introduced into England is not clearly recorded. At first the bedstead was simply provided with four straight legs, and a plank of wood at the head to support a pillow. Such a one was used in civilized France in the year 886. Strutt represents a similar one of the Anglo-Danish or Anglo-Saxon period; and he also gives one of the latter time, which is provided with curtains and four posts supporting a tester or canopy shaped like the roof of a house. In the twelfth century bedsteads were little more than benches, on which mattresses were laid; and it appears that up to this period they were seldom provided with canopies. But we find a representation of one in this century with a side terminating in a wooden tester. In the romance of "Ywayne and Gawin," written in this age, we read,—

“In at y^e dore she him led,
And did him sit upon his bed,
A quylt ful nobil lay theron,
Richer saw he neuer none.”

A bed and a chest were the chief appendages of the sleeping apartment at this time; and the room was situated on the second story, and was called the solar or sollere. The term bedchamber sometimes, but not often, occurs in the precepts of Henry III. (1216—1272), in whose reign a portion of the private chamber was partitioned off by wainscoting or a slight wall for the reception of a bed; and the wall at the head and sides of the bed was usually boarded. At this time the tester, or *testier*, was in use, and, as the name implies, was provided with a canopy for the protection of the head. A document dated in the reign of Henry III. (1260) directs the Sheriff of Surrey without delay to have painted in the King's chamber on the blank wall at the head of his bed the resemblance of a curtain or hanging. Strutt gives us the drawing of a bedstead of the time of this king, much like a modern French one, except that there is no board between the two posts.

In the fourteenth century, bedsteads were not only provided with testers, but were also hung with richly embroidered and gold-fringed tapestry. In the romance of “Arthur of Lytle Brytayne” is the following striking description of beds and bedsteads in the reign of Edward II. (1307—1327), which shows that they were then very splendid:—“There were dyverse beddis wonderfull ryche, but specyally one, the whiche stode in the myddes of the chambre, surmounted in beaute all other; for y^e utter brasses therof were of grene jasper with grete barres of golde, set full of precyous stones, and the crampons were of fyne sylver enbordered wyth golde, the postes of yvery, with pomelles of corall, and the staves closed in bokeram covered wyth crymesyn satyn, and shetes of sylke with a ryche coverynge of ermyns, and other clothes of cloth of golde, and four square pyllowes wrought amonge the Sarasyns; the curtaynes were of grene sendall vyroned [surrounded] wyth gold and azure; and rounde aboute this bedde there laye on the flour carpettes of sylke poynted and embrowdred with ymages of gold; and at the foure corners of this bedde there were foure condytes mervaylously wrought by subtyll entayle, out of the whiche there yssued so swet an odour and so delectable, y^t all other swetenesse of the world were as no thyng to the regarde thereof; and at the head of thys bedde there stode an ymage of golde, and had in his lyfte hand a bowe of yvery, and in his right hande an arowe of fyne sylver; in the myddes of his brest there were letters that sayd thus,” &c. In another part of the same romance we have the following description of a bed:—“Upon the bed there was a riche quylt wrought with coten, covered with crimson sendal styched with thredes of golde, and shetes of whyte sylke, and over al a rych furre of ermynes.” The bedstead seems to have been made with a railing, called *outerbras*, at the sides and feet; while the

solid head was surmounted by a figure. The posts, which sustained the tester, were two in number at the feet; while the uprights called staves, and covered with crimson satin, supported the head.

Froissart tells us that while Edward III. (1327—1377) was at Wark Castle, the Countess of Salisbury led the King to a most beautifully furnished bedchamber. In "The Squire of Low Degree," a poem of this time, is the following description of the bed of a princess:—

"Your blankettes shal be of fustyane,
Your shetes shal be of clothe of Rayne,
Your head shete shal be of pery pyght,
Wyth dymondes set and rubys bryghte;
Whan you are layd in bed so softe
A cage of golde shal hange alofte."

Chaucer, who elaborately describes sleeping apartments in his "Dreme," "Miller's Tale," and "Clerk of Oxenford's Tale," refers to the above-mentioned "Clothe of Rayne" as follows:—

"Of downe of pure dove's white
I wol give him a fether bed,
Raied wel with gold, and right wel clad
In fine blacke sattin d'outremere,
And many a pillowe, and every bere [case]
Of cloth of Raynes, to slepe on soft."

It was so called from its being made at Rennes, in Brittany; and was considered to be a great luxury. An inferior stuff had been previously used, called camoke, camoka, chamiere, and camelette, which was made by the Orientals of camel's hair; but this was imitated in silk only, and then termed camlette. The above-quoted expressions "many a pillowe," and "four square pyllowes," inform us that several were used in one bed. A poem entitled "Syr Eglamour of Artoys" tells us how richly beds were wrought in early times:—

"The knyghth syhnd, and seyde alas!
Adjoynyng tyll his bed he gas,
That rychely was wrought."

And in "Syr Bevy's" we read of—

"Beddes of silke schon
Quiltes of gold thar upon."

That curtains were used to beds we learn from "William and the Werwolf":—

"And for dola doteth, and doth him to hire chaumber,
And busked evene to hire bed but nothing he no fond
Withinne hire comely curtynes but hire clothes warme."

And that these curtains were hung on wooden rails appears in "Syr Bevy's," above quoted:—

“A couertine on raille tre,
For no man scholde on his bed i se.”

Foot-boards to bedsteads came into use early. In an extremely rare and curious old English poem, on the “Five Wounds of Christ,” are two drawings of bedsteads complete, and one of a foot-board for the same.

In 1356, Elizabeth, Countess of Northampton, bequeathed to her daughter an embroidered bed of red worsted. Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, gave, in 1361, a bed with the arms of England to his niece. Agnes, Countess of Pembroke, in 1367 gave to her daughter a bed with the furniture of her father's arms. In 1368, Robert, Earl of Suffolk, bequeathed his “bed with the eagle.” William, Lord Ferrers, of Groby, who died in 1371, by his will, dated in 1368, bequeathed to Henry, his son, his green bed, with his arms thereon; and to Margaret, his daughter, his white bed, and all the furniture with the arms of Ferrers and Ufford empaled. In 1371, Sir Walter Manney gave all the beds in his wardrobe, excepting his folding bed of blue and red. Edward the Black Prince, in 1376, bequeathed “to our son Richard, the bed which the King, our father, gave us; to Sir Roger de Clarendon, a silk bed; to Sir Robert de Walsham, our confessor, a large bed of red camora, with our arms embroidered at each corner, also embroidered with the arms of Hereford; to Monsr. Alayne Cheyne, our bed of camora powdered with blue eagles.” Edward III., in 1377, gave to Richard, son of the Black Prince, “an entire bed, marked with the arms of France and England, now in our palace of Westminster.” In 1380, Edmond, Earl of March, left “our large bed of black satin, embroidered with white lions and gold roses, with escutcheons of the arms of Mortimer and Ulster.” The widow of the Black Prince, in 1385, gave “to my dear son the King (Richard I.) my new bed of red velvet, embroidered with ostrich feathers of silver and heads of leopards of gold, with boughs and leaves issuing out of their mouths; to my dear son Thomas, Earl of Kent, my bed of red camak, paied with red and rays of gold; to my dear son John Holland a bed of red camak.” Margaret, Countess of Devon, in 1391 bequeathed to her son Peter her “bed of red and green paly.” Richard, Earl of Arundel, in 1392 gave to his wife, Philippa, “a blue bed, marked with my arms and the arms of my late wife; . . . to my son Richard a standing bed called Clove; also a bed of silk, embroidered with the arms of Arundel and Warren; . . . to my dear son Thomas my blue bed of silk, embroidered with griffins; to my daughter Charlton my bed of red silk; to my daughter Margaret my blue bed.” Sir John Cobham, in 1394, gave “a red bed, embroidered with lions; also a bed of Norwich stuff, embroidered with butterflies.” Alice, Lady West, in 1395, gave “a bed paled black and white,” and “a bed of tapiter's work.” John, Duke of Lancaster, in 1397 bequeathed “my large bed of black velvet, embroidered with a circle of fetter-locks (the badge of his house) and garters;

all the beds made for my body, called in England trussing beds; my white bed of silk, with blue eagles displayed."

In the fourteenth century some of the principal business transactions took place in the bedroom; and sovereigns and noblemen held courts, councils, and audiences in their sleeping chambers. Froissart presented his book of "Love Poems" to Richard II. (1377—1399) in the King's apartment, and he tells us that after the ceremony he laid the volume upon the bed. Of a truth there is nothing new under the sun. A chronicler of Chigny, in Paris, tells us, in reference to the beds there, "*Ces lits, hospitaliers par leur taille, permettoient aux Princes d'y recevoir près d'eux les ambassadeurs ou d'autres hôtes illustres.*" We have heard of a negotiation between two British statesmen matured beneath the same blanket and counterpane; and not many years ago the Americans had a method of meeting for the despatch of business in one bed.

Thomas, Earl of Warwick, in 1400, gave a bed of silk, embroidered with bears and his arms, with all thereto appertaining. Thomas de Muscundun, in 1402, bequeathed to his wife a bed, with a coverlet made of velvet and satin, and paned with ermine in stripes or borders. In the will of William of Wykeham, who died in 1404, is the following passage relating to his bed:—"Item lego reverendo in Christo patri domino Roberto Dei gratiâ Londoniensi episcopo majorem lectum meum rubeum de serico, qui pendere solet in majori camera palatii Wintoniensis, cum toto apparatu ejusdem, ac totam sectam de tapetis rubeis cameræ prædictæ quibus uti soleo cum eodem lecto ibidem." The serico above named was a silk, of which Bruges was the chief mart in the thirteenth century. In 1409 Lady Elizabeth Despenser bequeathed a bed. In 1411 Lady Joane Hungerford left "a green bed, embroidered with one greyhound." In 1415, Edward, Duke of York, gave "my bed of feathers and leopards, with the furniture appertaining to the same; also my . . . green bed, embroidered with a compass." In 1434, Joane, Lady Bergavenny, bequeathed "a bed of gold swans, with tapetter of green tapestry, with branches and flowers of divers colours; and two pairs of sheets of Raynes, a pair of fustians, six pairs of other sheets, six pairs of blankets, six mattresses, six pillows, and with cushions and banncoves that longen to the bed aforesaid; a bed of cloth of gold with lebardes, with those cushions and tapettes of my best red worsted that belong to the same bed, and bancours and formers that belong to the same bed; also four pairs of sheets, four pairs of blankets, three pillows, and three mattresses, a bed of velvet, white and black paled, with cushions, tapettes, and formez that belong to the same bed; three pairs of sheets, three pairs of blankets, three pillows, and three mattresses; a bed of blue baudekyn (the richest kind of stuff, the web being gold and the woof silk with embroidery), with cushions, tapettes of blue worsted, the formez that belong to the same bed, four pairs of sheets, four pairs of blankets, four pillows, and four mattresses; my bed of silk, black and red,

embroidered with woodbined flowers of silver, and all the costers and apparel that belongeth thereto, twelve pairs of sheets of the best cloth that I have, save Reynes, six pairs of blankets, and a pane of menyver; and my best black bed of silk, with all the apparel of a chamber of the best black tapetter that I have, six pairs of sheets," &c.

Strutt represents a bedstead of the time of Henry VI. without any posts to support the tester; and Rows, in his "*Life of Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick*," *temp.* Edward IV., engraved a similar one. In both the tester extends as far as the bedstead. In 1474 Lady Elizabeth Andrews bequeathed a bed.

Among the MSS. of Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, was one entitled "A remarkable Story of a great sum of Money found in a cumbersome wooden Bedstead, at Leycester, on which R. III. (1483—1485) had layn before the Battle at Bosworth. From a MS. intituled 'Remembrances, collected by Sir Roger Twysden.'" This story is so interesting that we give it entire from the recorder's commonplace book:—"I have beene informed by Sr Basil Brooke, a very honest gentleman, and by Mrs. Cumber, a citizen of London, who was bread up at Leicester, that Richard y^e third, before he fought at Bosworth, lay in an house that was then, or afterwards, an inne, and called the 'Blue Boar,' in which house, after hys defeat at Bosworth, 1485, there remayned a great cumbersom wooden beadstead, in which hymself lay beefore y^e fight, guilded, and with planks or boords at y^e bottom,—not, as y^e use now is, with courds; which beadstead, after y^e battle,—the bedding and what else of worth beeing taken away,—remayned, as a neglected peece, at y^e inne, in which dwelt one Mr. Clark, in her tyme, from whom I had y^e relation,—whose wife, going one day to make up a bed, they had placed in it,—in styrring of it, found a peece of gold to drop from it,—and then, upon search, perceived the beadstead to have a double bottom, all which space betweene y^e two bottoms was fylled with gold and treasure, all coyned beefore Richard y^e 3ds tyme, or by hym,—from whence this Clark reaped an incredyble masse of wealth (but had wit enough not to discover y^e same), but beecame of a poore man very ritch, was Mayor,—and this, in y^e end, was by hys servants discovered. The sayd Clark in y^e end dying left hys wife very ritch, who styll kept on y^e inne at y^e 'Blue Bore' in Leicester, tyll, in the end, some guests coming to lodge with her, she was by them robd, who carryed away seven hors load of treasure, and yet left great storre scatterd about the howse of gold and silver, Mrs. Cleark herself beeing in this action made away by a mayd-servant, who stopt her breath by thrusting her finger in her throat, she beeing a very fat person;—for which fact Mrs. Cumber saw her burnt as the seven men were hanged. This was I first told by Sr Basill Brooke, which was since confirmed to me by Mrs. Cumber, who hath lived there, saw y^e woeman and y^e beadstead, and knewe y^e relation to bee true, and says it was about some forty years since these persons were executed for it. This she affirmed unto me

this 29 August, 1653, and I dare say was trewe, for they were, both Sr Basill Brooke and Mrs. Cumber, very good, trewe, and worthy persons.—ROGER TWYSDEN.”

In the will of Cecily, Duchess of York, dated in 1495, we find the following bequests:—“I geve to my lord Prince a bedde of arres of the whele of fortune, and testour of the same, a counter-point of arras, and a tappett of arres with the pope. . . . I geve to my doughter, Anne, the largest bedde of bawdekyn, with counterpoint of the same . . . I geve to my son William . . . twoo beddes of downe, and twoo bolstours to the same. . . . I geve to John Bury . . . a feder bed, a bolstour to the same, the best of feders. . . . I geve to John Peitwynne . . . a white bedde of lynnyn, a feder bedde, and a bolstour. . . . I geve to Anne Pinchbeke . . . a tester, a siler, and a countre point of bawdekyn, the lesser of ij. . . . I geve to Alisaunder Cressener my best bedde of downe, and a bolster to the same.” The counterpane which succeeded the pane (from *pannum*) of fur had knotted or contre-pointé threads stitched through.

Lady Katherine Hastings, early in the sixteenth century, bequeathed “a bedde of tymbre,” and “a good fedur bedde, a boulster, a pair of blankets, a paire of fustians, a pair of fine sheets, a sellor or sillur, a tester, a counterpointe of rosemary, a quilt happing, a chike happing, a white square happing, and a white mantell.” When Cardinal Wolsey took a lease of Hampton Manor and Manor House, in 1514, he received twenty “bedsteddis” as part of the demise. Afterwards this prelate entertained certain French ambassadors at his palace at Hampton with great splendour. His private secretary has recorded that during the preparations for them “the yeomen and groomes of the wardrobe were busied in hanging of the chambers, and furnishing the same with beds of silk, and other furniture in every degree. . . . There was also provided two hundred and eighty beds, furnished with all manner of furniture to them belonging, too long particularly to be rehearsed, but all wise men do sufficiently know what belongeth to the furniture thereof, and that is sufficient at this time to be said.” We are sorry to read that after the grand reception banquet of the ambassadors “many of the Frenchmen were faine to be led to their beds.” In an inventory of goods which belonged to a shopkeeper of Kirton, in Lindsey, who drowned himself in 1519, are the following entries:—“A bolst’, vjd.; iij bedstoks, ix d.; ij payr of ffembull shetts, ijs. viij d.” Fimble sheets were sheets woven from the female hemp. The fimble or female hemp was in former days principally used for domestic purposes; the carl or male hemp being reserved for ropes, sacking, and other coarse manufactures. The same inventory also contains these further items:—“ij lynyng scheets, ijs. viij d.; ffedd’ bedbolst’, iiij d.; ix coods, viij d.” Coods were pillows. In the will of one William Jenison, dated in 1587, we find “xxj coddess” valued at £3 10s. The will of Dame Maude Parr, dated in 1529, contains the following

passage:—"I will that my doughter, Katherine Borowe, have after my debtes paid my bedde of purple satteyne panyd with cloth of golde, and in like manner to my doughter, Anne, my bedde of grene tynsell and white satteyne embróthered with blue velvit; and to every of my said doughters competent stuff for yche of them for a bedde; and to eyche of them a payer of fine camericke sheetes." The will of Archbishop Warham, dated in 1530, in part runs as follows:—"Do will and bequethe to all and every of my chamberleyne and to Rychard Wynesbury a fethur'bedd with the apparell complete. . . . I bequethe also to my kynnesman, Raufe Moyle, a fethur bedd complet." One Margaret Jorden by her will, dated in 1539, gave "vnto Richard Morgan a payr of shets; . . . to Thomas Phillips, curate, one peyr of shets; . . . vnto Robert Grey one payr of shets; . . . to John Watman 'is wyffe one payr of canvas shets." By his will, dated in 1540, one William Harvie gave to one of his sons "a bedde in the low chambre, wt the tester and curtens p'teyning to the same;" and to another son "my bedde that I do lye vpon, wt the p'tnaunce." The will of the Rev. Nicholas Bowse, rector of Keniton Mandeville, Somerset, dated in 1541, contains the following bequests:—"It'm; to Isbell Alan the bed that y lye on, wt all that p'tayneth thereto. It'm; to Peter Walter, the sextune, my bedd. . . . It'm, to Thomas Marche a sheett and a blankett." In an inventory of effects belonging to Henry VIII., and contained in his palace at Westminster, in 1542, many bedsteads are named. In the will of Elizabeth Coddington, lady of the manor of Ixworth, 1571, mention is made of "the red russells quilt" of "a felde bed."

By will, dated in 1604, Henry Bromfield, of Guildford, Surrey, yeoman, gave to John Fygges "one flock bed, a fether bolster, a paire of shetes, blanket, and coverlett, a pece of brasse, and a pewter platter;" to Katheryn Fygges "a hollande shete, and a paire of hollen pillo biers [pillowcases], wrote one side;" and to Alice Figge "a holland shete and a spere clothe." Shakspeare (obit. 1616) gave unto his wife his "second best bed, with the furniture." Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, by his will, dated in 1711, gave the bed and furniture of his best bedchamber, four pairs of holland sheets, and three pairs of sheets for servants, to his son William; and also gave similar articles to his other children. Two wills, one dated 1766, and the other as late as 1773, begin by bequeathing first the best bed and bedstead. The above testamentary gifts clearly show the high value which was set upon beds from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century inclusive, when they were costly comforts.

In the "Privy Purse Expenditure" of James I. we find the following entries:—"Sweete bagges for the Kynges lynnen, and sweete water and powder for the bedchamber, xxxvj li. xiijs. viijd. . . . A canvas pallette for the Kinges bedd, ij li. xs. . . . Strawe for the Kinges bedd, xij li. xvs."

Some of the early bedsteads were furnished with standing up side and

foot boards, shutting into grooves, in order to keep in the materials of the bed, whether straw or rushes. Which fact gives a reason for the "instructions furnished to the gentleman usher" in olden time, as to the duty of "the yeoman with a dagger to search the straw of the King's bed, that there be no untruth therein, before they cast the bed of down upon that."

Many of the now existing ancient bedsteads are made of oak, and they are generally low; showing by inference that the sleeping-rooms of our ancestors were also low. Some are not more than six feet and a half in their total height from the floor; and of this small height the frames on which the bed rested are two feet from the ground, so as to allow ample room for the truckle or trundle beds to be thrust under them when not in use; consequently the distance from the bed to the wooden tester or canopy was barely four feet, a space which must have compelled the sleeper to creep into bed. The truckle or trundle bed was a kind of low, moveable couch, generally appropriated to the use of attendants, who, as late as the seventeenth century, slept in the same room with their masters for the sake of protection. These beds are less common than they formerly were, but they are not obsolete in England. They are to be found in use in Norfolk. In America these beds are now common. There they are about a foot in height, and are used by young children sleeping in the same room with adults. Their legs being mounted on castors, they are rolled under the larger bedsteads when not in use. To the heads of ancient bedsteads we sometimes find arched recesses or shelves, about four inches in width, sixteen inches in height, and five or six inches in depth; and most of the bedsteads which have this arrangement show signs of burning at that part; hence we may infer that the candlestick was placed in the recess at night, and that our forefathers were addicted to reading in bed. In some old oak bedsteads the head, with its tester and foot pillars, stands alone; but has a stump bedstead or frame for the bedding to rest on within unattached, and so capable of being removed as occasion might require, leaving the other parts standing. In these cases the tester is necessarily seven or eight inches longer than usual, to admit of the curtains passing round the foot of the stump bedstead, and between it and the pillars which support the tester with its cornices and valances. Instead of the modern sacking or laths, the mattress and bedding, of whatever kind, was laid on and supported by large cords drawn through holes bored in the framework of the sides, head, and bottom, and crossed over each other at intervals of a foot or nine inches. Some bedsteads were also furnished with boards or flaps, suspended from the framework by hinges, which served the purpose of our modern bases or lower valances; but when lifted up were supported on hanging irons, and then formed seats or benches all round. Frequently the ancient bedstead was provided with a bed-staff, which was a round wooden pin inserted in the sides of bedsteads to keep the clothes from slipping out; but whether it was placed horizontally or upright does not appear. If horizontally, it

must have been about six feet long. It seems to have been used as a weapon sometimes, for Chaucer tells us that the "scolere Johan," although a stranger in the bedroom, tried to find a staff by moonlight, and the miller's wife finding one, unwittingly knocked her husband down with it:—

"This Johan stert up as fast as ever he might,
And grasped by the walles to and fro,
To find a staf; and sche sturt up also,
And knewe the estres bet them than dede you,
And by the wal sche took a staf anon."

In the reign of Edward I. (1272—1307) Sir John Chichester, as he was playing with his man-servant, killed him in the following way:—Sir John made a pass at him with a sword in the scabbard, and the servant parried it with a bedstaff, but in so doing struck off the chape of the scabbard, whereby the end of the sword came out of the scabbard, and the thrust not being effectually broken, the servant was killed by the point of the sword. The frontispiece to a work entitled "Juniper Lecture, with the description of all sorts of Women, good and bad," published in 1639, represents a woman entering a bedroom to punish her husband, who is in bed, and who grasps the bedstaff as a foil to protect himself. In a woodcut in Wright's "Domestic Manners," &c., in the Middle Ages, we see a chambermaid of the seventeenth century using a bedstaff to beat up the bedding in the process of making the bed. The staff must have been a light and portable article, for we find its rapid movements passing into a proverb, "the twinkling of a bedstaff," or bedpost. Shadwell, in his "Virtuoso," 1676, makes *Sir Samuel Hearty* to say, "'Gad, I'll do it instantly, in the twinkling of a bedstaff.'" Rabelais also says, "He would have cut him down in the twinkling of a bedstaff." Colman puts similar words into the mouth of *Lord Duberly*, in the "Heir-at-Law." And *Bobadil*, in "Every Man in his Humour," uses the same phrase to illustrate his skill with the rapier.

Let us walk in imagination through the bedchambers of some of the hoary but unmouldering manor-palaces and other dwelling-places of England, where the huge bedsteads stand like solemn fortalices or temples of Time, in which that old shape lies at rest, century after century. History has hung her engraved tablets upon the lofty posts, and bids us read thereon the records of the far past—those terrible Tudor times when the sleepers went from those beds to the wars, the courts, the stakes, the blocks, the axes, and the graves. Here we may recall the old lines upon a bed,—

"To-day thy bosom may contain
Exulting pleasure's fleeting train,
Desponding grief to-morrow."

In truth, we may hear sad mysteries in the voiceful hush which rests upon these stately thrones of sleep, with their burgenets of feathers, their

heavy cornices of polished oak, their massive folds of damask, and their dim and faded wraps of ghostly arras, of which the workmanship surpasses the material.

At Lovely Hall, near Blackburn, is an interesting bedstead of the time of Henry VIII. Its posts and headboard are highly enriched with carvings. It was seen by the Rev. William Allen, in the course of his sacred duties in administering to a dying parishioner the last consolations of religion, and was purchased by him after the decease of the sick person.

At Oldaport Farm, near Modbury, Devonshire, in 1813, was a carved bedstead, in good preservation, which, being a fixture of the house, belonged to the landlord, Lord Ashburton. It was decorated with human and other figures, sculptured in alto-relievo, and was of the time of Henry VIII.

At the "Saracen's Head" inn, Ware, is the great bed of Ware, which was put up by auction in September, 1864, and bought in at the upset price of one hundred guineas. It is mentioned by Shakspeare, in his "Twelfth Night," wherein *Sir Toby Belch* refers to "as many lies as will lie in thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware, in England, set 'em down." It is a fine specimen of a bedstead of the time of Queen Elizabeth, and is of oak, in good preservation, and has some remains of colour in its frieze. It is of huge dimensions, being in height seven feet one and a half inches; in length, ten feet nine inches; and in width ten feet nine inches. In Chauncy's "Hertfordshire" is an account of its receiving at once twelve men and their wives, who lay at top and bottom, in this mode of arrangement,—first, two men, then two women, and so on alternately, so that no man was near to any woman except his wife.

At Burghley are several splendid state beds. One of them is said to have been occupied by Queen Elizabeth on her visits to the Lord Treasurer Burghley. It stands in a chamber which is called "Queen Elizabeth's bedroom," in the western first floor of the mansion. It has hangings of green velvet on a ground of gold tissue. In one of the northern rooms, known as "the black bedchamber," is an ancient state bed of black satin, superbly embroidered with flowers, and lined with gold colour. In another apartment is the state bed which was fitted up for Queen Victoria on her visit to Burghley in 1844, and is carved in very elegant designs.

At Hardwicke Hall, Derbyshire, is a bed which was used by Mary, Queen of Scots, in one of her visits to that county. In the bedroom of the same Queen at Holyrood Palace, in which David Rizzio was murdered, is a bedstead covered with red damask, which is stated, we believe erroneously, to have been used by that ill-fated sovereign. It seems that this bedstead was used by Charles I. on his visit to Holyrood.

At Shottery, in a chamber in Anne Hathaway's cottage, is a curious old carved bedstead, which has been preserved there from time imme-

morial, and as a family heirloom has descended through many generations of the Hathaways. It is about seven feet by six feet in size, and its four massive posts, carved over with leaves and flowers, carry a moulded cornice similarly wrought. At the head of the bedstead is some elaborate panel and relieve work. The coffers, or sunken parts of the panels, are enriched by being inlaid with a lighter wood in geometrical patterns. On the framing of three of the panels are, finely carved in high relief, the effigies of three kings, probably emblematical of the three Kings of Cologne, or the Magi who came to inquire the place of Christ's birth. Here also are preserved a pillow-case and a pair of homespun linen sheets, marked with the initials of a certain Elizabeth Hathaway, who was baptized in 1582. They are soft in texture and of good colour; the fabric is of the stoutness of ordinary canvas. Each sheet consists of three lengths, united by a band of fancy needlework of the description called point-work.

The Cumnor bedstead, at Sudely Castle, Gloucestershire, is said to have been the property of the unfortunate Amy Robsart, and is very handsome.

There are some fine old carved oak bedsteads at Marple Hall, Cheshire, particularly one made especially for President Bradshaw, to whom the hall belonged, and decorated with carved arms and mottoes.

At Goodrich Court, Herefordshire, is a bedstead of the time of James I., the posts of which are of very dark foreign wood, and the back of which is of somewhat lighter wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. It has plain panels behind the bolster, a dome top, with sky-blue figured damask curtains, and a splendid counterpane of the same colour, embroidered with flowers. At the same place is a bedstead of the time of Charles I., which has upon it the date 1628, and is of oak, very dark from age.

At Knole, in the Venetian bedroom, are the elegant state bed and furniture which are said to have been placed there for the reception of James II. In the King's bedchamber is the state bed in which it is said the Pretender was born. It is of gold and silver tissue, lined with pink satin, embroidered with gold and silver, and cost £8,000. In passing, we may add that the counterpane which covered the bed of Charles I. the night before his execution, and which was made of a thick rich blue satin, embroidered with gold and silver in a deep border, continued to be used by the family of Champneys, of Orchardleigh, Somersetshire, as a christening mantle, from the period when it came into their possession by marriage with the sole heiress of the Chandlers, of Camm's Hall, Hampshire, a family connected with Cromwell, until the present century. In 1642, Knole was plundered by a party of rebels. Among other goods damaged by them were, "in my lord's chamber, x 2 long cushion-cases embroidered wth sattin and gold, and the plumes upon the bed-tester, to y^e value of 30 l."

At Bingham's Melcombe is a famous oak bedstead of about the end of the seventeenth century.

In the bedroom of William III., at Hampton Court, is now placed the state bed of Queen Charlotte. The furniture is a most beautiful specimen of embroidered needlework, executed at an institution for the orphan daughters of clergymen, which was under the patronage of her Majesty. In the Queen's bedroom is the state bed of Queen Anne, the rich velvet furniture and hangings of which were wrought at Spitalfields.

Returning to Hardwicke Hall, we must observe a very handsome bedstead, which is of the close of the reign of William III., and does not materially differ from that of Queen Anne's time at Warwick Castle. It is of crimson velvet, with ornaments carved in wood, and covered with gold and silver thread, the counterpane being of damask silk. On the top of the bedstead is, at each angle, a plume of pink and white ostrich feathers, and the fringes are of blue, brown, red, and other coloured silks. Its height is immense, being fourteen feet three inches; its length is seven feet, and its width six feet.

At Stowe, the residence of the Duke of Buckingham, was a large state bed, which was constructed in 1737, for Frederick, Prince of Wales; and was occupied in 1805 by George IV., and in 1845 by Queen Victoria. The pillars at each corner of this unique and gorgeous bed were fluted and richly gilt; and supported a crimson canopy, elaborately carved, and burnished with gold, and bearing a splendid gilded pine upon its apex. The hangings at the head were of crimson, and those around it were of yellow silk damask. The counterpane was of satin, and bore, upon a ground chiefly of a maroon colour, embroidered flowers of exquisite device and workmanship. This bedstead was sold at the Stowe sale, in 1848, for the inadequate price of fifty-one guineas.

At Arundel Castle is a royal state bed, which was built expressly for the visit of Queen Victoria to that establishment in 1846. It is of highly artistic design, with lavish brilliancy of decoration, and has been thus described:—"It is of white and gold, and richly carved throughout, surmounted by a gorgeous canopy, in the centre of which rises a dome, formed of gold-coloured satin, interlaced and looped with thick rope of gold. In the corners of the interior of the canopy appear the letters 'V. R.' in gilt carving, laid upon, and relieved by, white satin. The head pillars which support the canopy are beautifully carved; and the twisted reeds of the upper part of the columns are intertwined with strings of pearls, producing a remarkably pleasing and elegant effect. The cornice which encloses the canopy is ornamented at the angles with carved imperial crowns; and in the centre of the sides and front appears the horse of Arundel, with an oak-branch in his mouth, and supported by a series of elaborate scroll-work. The head of the bedstead is beautifully rayed in gold-coloured silk, and the headboard is covered with crimson brocade, surmounted by the royal arms, exquisitely carved; together with a profusion of the flowers and leaves of the rose, thistle, and shamrock. The foot-board is also richly carved, and surmounted by the

ducal arms, beautifully chiselled and richly gilt; the foot-rails, &c., are literally covered with carved and gilt oak-leaves; and the bases are of heavy crimson silk bullion fringe, interspersed with gold-coloured silk hangings. The draperies of the bed are of rich crimson and gold brocade, lined with gold-coloured satin; the shaped balances being looped with massive silk rope tassels, and trimmed with gold bullion fringe. Altogether the state bed has a most splendid effect."

At Hinckley was a curious and very ancient oak bedstead, much gilt and ornamented, with various panelled compartments, neatly painted with emblematical devices and Latin mottoes in capital letters, conspicuously introduced into each piece. The devices were twenty-nine in number, and were very varied in character: thus,—a sundial, "*Et pilo sua umbra*;" two dogs barking at the shadow from the moon, "*Rumpentur ilia codri*;" an ostrich with a horseshoe in its beak, "*Spiritus durissima coquit*;" a tortoise walking on a bed of roses, "*Inter spinas calceatus*." This bedstead might aptly be described as a moral and philosophical one; and we hope that its impictured ethics turned the dreams of its sleepers into profitable homilies.

In the South Kensington Museum is a bedstead in carved oak, inlaid with marquetry of coloured wood. It is of Flemish work, and dated 1626. Its height is six feet ten inches, its length six feet seven inches, and its width three feet seven inches. Its cost to the nation was £11.

At Swansea Museum is a fine original specimen of a very ancient oak bedstead. It is of great massiveness, and has boldly carved figures, armorial bearings, &c.

Dr. William Taswell, in his autobiography, between 1651—1682, tells us that he saw in Carisbrook Castle, in 1675, in the Governor's bedchamber, "a bed which, as to curtains and covering, consisted of the bark of an Indian tree."

In a room in the citadel of Coburg is the broken and decayed bedstead on which Luther slept. It occupies the same position which it had three centuries ago, when the Reformer used it; but it has been sadly mutilated by relic-mongers, who have from time to time sliced pieces off the posts, until they are now only half their original size.

In the palace at Munich is the Golden Bed, a regally superb article, whose curtains of dark crimson velvet are weighed down by eight hundred thousand florins' worth of sterling gold; the precious materials being worked in splendid efflorescence, and large and elaborate pattern over the pile. The canopy is of enormous height.

At the Hotel de Cluny, Paris, is the bedstead of Francis I., Pierre de Gondi, the Savoyard prelate, who has blended his sacerdotal insignia and family blazon on the massive golden-wrought furniture, with the mythological telamons, the dolphins, and the fleur-de-lys of the chivalrous monarch.

In the Louvre at Paris is the tent bed which was used by the Emperor

Napoleon; and in the palace at Wurzburg is a bed which was occupied by him on three different occasions. It was used by Lord Aberdeen on the visit of Queen Victoria to Germany in 1845. In 1849 a bed and chair, once the property of Napoleon, were sold at Brookley Hall sale. They were brought from Malmaison; and their peculiar style, that of the Empire, was as little worthy of commendation as that of any period in art. It had the affectation of classic taste, and a squareness of outline, most distinguishable from the ornate and flowing outline of the styles which prevailed before the Revolution. In the exhibition of Madame Tussaud and Sons is the camp bedstead which was used by Napoleon at St. Helena during seven years, with the mattress and pillow on which he died. For this bed the proprietors paid £450.

In 1833 the Emperor of Russia presented to the Schah of Persia a state bed formed of solid crystal, resplendent with silver ornaments. It was ascended by steps of blue glass, and had a fountain for scented water attached to it. When the chamber in which it stood was lit up the bedstead presented the appearance of a combination of countless diamond sparks.

At a meeting of the Freemasons of the Church, held in 1845, the Earl of Cadogan exhibited one of the columns of the bedstead of Pope Leo X.

About twenty years ago a codicil of Lord Scarborough's, disposing of £100,000, was discovered by a housemaid stuck into a bedstead which she was cleaning.

In the Great Exhibition of 1851 were numerous highly decorated bedsteads; but the most grand and sumptuous production in that class of furniture was one made by Leistler, of Vienna. It was truly a state bed, being eleven feet long by nine feet wide, and thirteen feet high; made of zebra-wood. Every portion was an isolated beauty, and all the portions were grouped with admirable skill to obtain relief by shadow. The head was occupied by a beautiful angel of peace in an arched niche, placed between panelled work; and at the foot were representations of our first parents, also in niches. The profuse ornamentation of foliage, figures, and scrolls, combining the several styles of Gothic, Italian, and Renaissance, made up a grand piece of cabinet-work, which was like an artist's dream solidified.

Lowe, in his "Central India during the Rebellion of 1857 and 1858," referring to the sacking of Dhar, and the loot of the princes' treasury, says, "In one dark, dusky room we found a large four-post silver bedstead, with all its trappings in silver. The posts lay against the mouldy walls in filthy bags; the silver rails, and steps, and bells belonging to the bed were all lying in a heap upon the floor." The bed of a poor Indian, which requires neither bedding nor curtains, is set upright against the wall during the day.

Amongst the Chinese the family bedstead is held in great veneration,

and passes from generation to generation for hundreds of years. It generally stands in an alcove; and is often of a light twisted wood, sometimes inlaid with ivory, curtained, clean, and picturesque. We remember to have seen a *meuble* of the Celestial Empire, the property of a Mandarin, which was taken at Peking by an English captain during the war of 1845. It was a very fine piece of Chinese cabinet-work, being of carved solid rosewood and ash, in many parts three inches in thickness. The design was most tasteful, and distinguished by elaborate beauty. The canopy was of teak, finely perforated.

The Russian peasant does not require a bed. In the winter he lies upon the stove, which is heated to an intense degree by a wood fire. The top of these stoves is very broad and flat.

In some countries the leaves of the beech tree are collected in the autumn before they have been injured by the frost, and are used instead of feathers for beds; and mattresses formed of them are said to be preferable to those either of straw or chaff.

Beds have their folk-lore: for instance, it is unlucky to say your prayers at the foot of the bed; they should be said at the side. It is unlucky to turn a bed on which a lady has been confined until after the lapse of a month from the confinement. If a lady complete a patchwork quilt without assistance she will never be married. Patchwork is generally made a social occupation, and a person must move very little in society, or be of unsocial temper, to do such a thing alone.

The above *notanda* and *collectanea* relative to beds and bedsteads have been made and gathered at various times and from many sources, some of which are not easily accessible to general readers, who read only for passing amusement. We therefore beg the excellent person who has been good enough to peruse our historical notelets to preserve them for future reference. And now, my dear friend, it is long past the time to get up; your coffee and toast are getting cold, and your eggs are something like oviform fossils. We hope that you have had a good night's rest, and also that you will enjoy your breakfast.

BLIND AUTHORS.

ONE of the greatest deprivations, if not the greatest to which mortal man is liable, is that wherein are—

“Never seen

Soul-cheering sunbeams, or wild nature's green ;”

a deprivation which those alone who suffer can fully comprehend. To fight the battle of life under a continual and unvarying shadow of darkness—to fight it with calm and unswerving fortitude amid the continual gloom of night—to grope the way without the sense of human protection against obstacles and stumblingstones,—there is in this a moral heroism which can hardly under any other circumstances be paralleled, and yet this has been again and again done by the blind. Of the many who labour under the deprivation of sight there are none but what deserve the sympathy of their fellow-mortals ; but above all do those earn our sympathy who possess that high and sensitive organization which is ordinarily and justly attributed to those who have been gifted with true poetic feelings. Of such persons there have been many, and when it is considered how difficult it must have been for them to express their sense of the beauty of that external nature whose features they could not look upon, the feeling of sympathy for them must be increased and deepened.

“Oh, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day !”

Prescott, the historian, one who suffered from this affliction, says that “the world of the blind is circumscribed by the little circle which they can span with their own arms. All beyond this has [for them] no real existence.” Words which to you and I, reader, are familiar, and with their use bring up familiar scenes and ideas, can to the blind in many cases produce only a vagueness which they cannot realize into anything which will present to their minds an idea of their reality ; they only hear of what we see, and therefore a mental darkness is frequently with the blind a consequence of that which is physical. But it has not been so with all who have been thus situated ;—the blind not unfrequently possess firmness of mind and an earnest concentration of purpose, which has enabled them to win their way in the world with a consistent steadiness which has ultimately brought them a measure of success, and in some cases not a little fame. There are few avenues of pleasure open for them, but many blind people have a real passion for music, while others again have enjoyed, and have learned to understand, and some even to write, poetry, and that of a high order. Amongst these latter there are some who deserve our praise and sympathy ; let us then take them by the hand

and lead them while they tell us something of their trials, sorrows, difficulties, and their pleasures,—it would be a hard lot indeed if there were no pleasures for them.

It ought to be stated, however, at the outset, that but few of the persons here classed as blind authors were born blind, but some of them lost the power of sight at so early an age, that if they retained any recollection of external nature, it could not but be very faint; others, again, were deprived of sight in boyhood, or in their riper years, and these, though not presenting the same amount of difficulties to be overcome, are still not devoid of instruction and interest.

HOMER, the earliest blind author of whom we have any data, was advanced in life, and had written a portion of the “*Iliad*” before he lost the power of sight, and the whole of the “*Odyssey*” was composed while suffering from this defect. He is generally represented as a blind beggar, singing his songs at the doors of the rich; but this is hardly reconcilable with what is known of the Greek bards and their modes of life. Homer makes but one reference to his misfortune in his books, when he says that the Muse had—

“With clouds of darkness quench’d his visual ray,
But gave him power to raise the lofty lay.”

High as Homer stands as an epic poet, he comes down to us but as a name, date and birthplace being equally involved in obscurity and fable—his biography offering few materials for notice, whilst his poetry has given abundant scope for criticism.

JOHN GOWER, or Old Father Gower, as he is sometimes termed, was born about the year 1325, and also became blind in advanced age; but little of his life is known, as materials for his biography are scanty and unreliable. The contemporary and friend of Chaucer, he apparently claims to have been the teacher of that poet, for he says in one place,—

“Greete well Chaucer when ye meete,
As my disciple and my poete.”

Gower’s principal poems were written in different languages—one in Latin, one in French, and one in English. The latter, the “*Confessio Amantis*,” was printed by Caxton in 1483, and is said to have been the most extensively circulated of all the books which came from Caxton’s press, being in it all the elements required for popularity in those early times, having full of stories which were probably common throughout Europe. From his grave and solemn style of writing, Chaucer styled him the “*Moral Gower*,” and he was considerably inferior to Chaucer in all the qualifications of a poet. For many years before his death he was helpless through old age and blindness; and at his death, by his own

direction, he was buried in the Church of St. Mary Overies (afterwards St. Saviour's), Southwark. Gower was more remarkable for learning than for genius, but was unquestionably a truthful if not a great poet.

MILTON, like Gower, did not lose his sight till he was in his declining years, and yet, amid the strife and turmoil of the time, while blind in his physical sight, yet clear in his mental vision, he sat down to write the "Paradise Lost," worthy of a place amongst the very greatest triumphs of the poet's art. A determined republican and Liberal in his earlier years, Milton wrote largely upon the popular side and against the royal party, and for this was duly rewarded by the Commonwealth, amongst other things being appointed Latin Secretary to Cromwell. At the Restoration, however, Milton had to seek safety in seclusion, and it is said that his friends got up a mock funeral for him, in order to induce the belief that the poet was dead; but Charles II. made no very strict search for him, laughing heartily at the attempted deceit, and shortly after was persuaded to grant a pardon to Milton, although his books were ordered to be burned by the common hangman. These prose writings were generally upon subjects of temporary interest, and on this account are not now much read.

While still a young man Milton had travelled much through France and Italy, and by this and severe study he stored his mind with all that was beautiful in nature and art, so that when the great cloud came over him, he was able to draw upon his memory for much of that florid imagery which is displayed in his great poems. Withdrawn from the actual strife and conflict of the times,—

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart,"

and he devoted himself in his latter years entirely to his poems. The bargain which was made by the poet with his publisher for the copyright of the "Paradise Lost" is somewhat astonishing in these days,—Milton was allowed £5 at first, and a like sum after 1,300 copies were sold, £10 in all; and his widow sold her right in the work after his death for £8!

Most people know the beautiful passages in which he refers to his blindness. One of these is as follows:—

"Not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn;
Or sight of vernal bloom or summer rose;
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But clouds instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me; from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank."

Though exceedingly bitter in controversy, Milton is said to have been of

a cheerful and even temperament, pleasant in his intercourse with society, of studious habits, and fond of music and conversation.

Unlike any of the preceding three, **BLIND HARRY** was sightless from birth. He lived about the same time as Gower, and it must have been a difficult matter in those early days to give a person in his condition an education so complete as he must have received ere he could write the poem upon which so much of his fame now rests. One can hardly, however, imagine from his poetry that the author was blind, as nowhere does he make the slightest allusion to the circumstance; and were it not that the name of Blind Harry has been so long traditionally and historically attached to the "*Life of Sir William Wallace*," it could not be known, as the poet has in various parts given such descriptions as might well be supposed could not be written by one blind from birth. The poem with which his name has been so long identified is one of nearly 1,200 lines, written in a simple unaffected style, of a thoroughly national cast, and altogether a surprising work for one so conditioned. It is founded upon the wild and extraordinary legends which many years had gathered round the name of the great Scottish chieftain, but the poem cannot be cited as an embodiment of historical facts, though some of his statements have been verified in our own day.

Blind Harry seems to have been one of those wandering minstrels who went up and down the country, reciting verses in the halls and at the festive boards of the ancient nobility, receiving in requital for this amusement supplies of food and clothing. In this respect Blind Harry was like his ancient prototype—Homer, who is said to have derived his livelihood in a similar manner, singing his lays at the banquets of the great and at public festivals. There will hardly be any doubt but that the blind Scottish poet was a great favourite with the unlettered people of his time, wherever he went, singing the traditions of, and inculcating a love for, his native land; he would speak to their inmost heart; and, long after the wandering bard was consigned to his last resting-place in some lowly strath, his lays were sung, and his memory held in remembrance.

Amongst the Celtic Irish, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there arose a poet who, in the midst of that untutored people, and himself without much education, employed his talents to the delight of all who understood him. **TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN**, generally called Carolan only, was born at Newton, in the county of Westmeath. By one traditionary account of him we learn that Carolan gave no signs of talent till he reached his eighteenth year, at which time he lost his sight by small-pox. Near his father's house, a small farm-stead, there were some grass-grown remains of an ancient tumulus, or rath, of the ancient Irish, about which, while possessed of sight, he had been accus-

tomed to play with his companions, and when unable to join in their sports, he often caused himself to be led to this mound, and there would stretch himself for hours under the soul-stirring rays of the noonday sun. While thus lolling and idling, he was frequently observed to start up suddenly, as if under some deep influence, which his friends afterwards ascribed to preternatural visions influenced by the fairy queen. In one of these he called hastily to his friends to lead him home, and when there he sat down to his harp and composed the air and words of a song of great beauty, addressed to Bridget Cruise, a young woman for whom he had a great but unrequited affection. The people believed him to have been then and there gifted with musical and poetic power by the fairies, and the spot is therefore still kept in remembrance. Another account of Carolan is more matter-of-fact, and, being devoid of all supernatural influence, only states that Carolan lost his eyesight at an early period of life, and bore his bereavement with cheerfulness. His friends early discovered that he had musical talent, and gave him every help in its cultivation. Bridget Cruise, to whom his first song was dedicated, slighted the blind bard, and he afterwards married a Mary Maguire, who proved a proud and extravagant, but yet an affectionate wife; and after marriage the young pair practised hospitality on so liberal a scale that they were very soon left destitute.

Carolan found no difficulty in commencing a wandering life like that of Blind Harry, although those peculiar phases of society to which such a life is best suited had long passed away; but the Irish gentry of Carolan's time had a great love and respect for the erratic poet and musician. Yet there was a great difference between the wanderings of Blind Harry and those of Carolan. The latter received invitations to his patrons' houses, and always remained some time with them as a friend and guest; there being not unfrequently a friendly competition among his patrons for the honour of entertaining the blind bard. On one occasion, while staying with Lord Mayo, Carolan felt himself in a measure overlooked on account of an Italian musician who was also a guest of his lordship at the same time. The Irish bard complained of this neglect to his entertainer, who at once said, "When you play in as masterly a manner as he does, you shall not be overlooked." Carolan immediately said that he would, though a stranger to Italian music, follow the foreigner in any piece he might play, and that he would himself play a voluntary, in which the Italian would not follow him. This challenge was accepted, and Carolan came off the victor in the contest. On another occasion an Italian musician in Dublin resolved to put the blind bard to a severe test. He chose a piece of Italian music, which he altered in such a manner that none but the most skilful musician could detect the alterations. Carolan, who was not aware that he was being subjected to any test, listened to the music with interest, and at its finish said that it was an excellent piece of music, but added, humorously, that it limped oddly here and there. Carolan

was then desired to amend the defects if he could, which he did, and the Italian admitted that none but a musician of the first order could have restored it so nearly to its original state.

Carolan early, unfortunately, contracted a love for whiskey, and latterly never composed without a bottle by his side. This habit injured his health so severely that he was told by a physician that if he did not refrain from it he would soon die. This he did for some time, but the habit was too strong upon him, and he returned to the drink with greater zest than before. Strange enough, while abstaining from his favourite beverage, his powers of composition entirely left him,—his harp lay in a corner, neglected and unstrung; and with resuming of the fatal habit, his old powers came back as strong and beautiful as ever.

In 1733 Carolan lost his wife, an event which, together with the habit to which he was so much given, brought on a long and lingering illness. When dying he called for his harp, and played his well-known "Farewell to Music," in so pathetic a strain as to bring tears to the eyes of those who stood around. He died at the age of sixty-eight, and was buried in the churchyard of Kilronan. Carolan is known to have composed about 200 pieces of music, to the most of which he also furnished verses, all in the vernacular of the country; many of these have been translated, and in this process have lost much of the beauty they possess in the original. The following four lines contain an allusion to his blindness, and are taken from a song called "Mable Kelly:"—

"Ev'n he, whose hapless eyes no ray
Admit from beauty's cheering day;
Yet, though he cannot see the light
He feels it warm, and knows it bright."

Before proceeding to notice the blind authors of more modern days, attention may be drawn to two in the far-off land of Persia, whose language is one of the most copious, as well as elegant, of the East, and whose literature is one of the most fertile in poetry, romance, and fable. The exuberant fancy of Persian poets knows no check, and spurns the control of what we are accustomed to consider as correct taste; and they sing much of love and wine, nightingales and flowers. Of one of their two blind authors little is now known. His name was ABUL HASAN RUDEGI, who lived about the year 952, and he rose by the King's favour to such an eminence that he had 200 slaves to wait upon him. Truly the poet had his reward in those days. But little has remained or is known of his 1,300,000 verses, or of his other works. Of the other—SHAH ALLUM, the last prince of the Timour dynasty in India, whose history is in itself a romance—we know a great deal more. Succeeding to the Mogul empire in 1759, when the Mussulman princes were at war against the Hindus, weakening each other, only eventually to become subject to the English, Shah Allum sought the assistance of all the

parties successively, in order to maintain his throne against the plots and machinations of his vizier, Gholam Kader, and the Shah was helped and abandoned by each in turn. During a short period of triumph on the side of Shah Allum, Gholam professed submission, and obtained pardon for his rebellion; but soon after again conspired against the too indulgent Shah. This time the conspiracy succeeded, and Gholam had the Shah in his power, when he put out his eyes with a poniard, and plundered the palace. The Mahratta princes soon avenged this outrage, put Gholam to a cruel death, and restored Shah Allum to his throne at Delhi, where he spent the remaining eighteen years of his troubled life, nominally a sovereign, but in reality a pensioner of the British, on whom he had become dependent. In this pitiable condition he solaced himself with cultivating poetry in the Persian language, and published several poems on the subject of his own misfortunes, from one of which we give the following extracts:—

Proceeding first to contrast his former with his present state, the Shah goes on to say,—

“ O’er India’s fair extensive plain,
 Auspicious dawn’d my early reign;
 Too soon the flattering prospect fled;
 Now sorrow shrouds this aged head.
 * * * * *
 Within the harem’s scented bowers
 No more I’ll pass the blissful hours;
 No more shall hear the tuneful throng
 Harmonious raise the enraptured song.
 In the lone prison’s dreary round
 The night-owl wakes her mournful sound;
 No courtiers crowd the emblazoned hall,
 No ready menials wait my call;
 My plaints in lingering echoes die,
 And the arched domes responsive sigh.
 Here murder stalks, suspicion reigns,
 Mysterious silence chills my veins.”

He then appeals for aid and help under the sufferings which he has been made to endure, and above all he seeks aid from Britain, and says,—

“ Has British justice, Britain’s boast,
 With Hastings left Hindóstan’s coast?
 Are favours past remembered not,
 A ceded empire,—all forgot?
 Forgot the day when first they came,
 And humbly urged the stranger’s claim;
 Poor wanderers from a foreign shore,
 By peaceful trade to increase their store?”

But all his appeals and wishes are apparently fruitless, and the Shah concludes this ode with a plaintive resignation to his fate:—

"Immersed in anguish deep,
 Unheard I mourn, unpitied weep;
 No gleam of hope, with cheering ray,
 Gilds my expiring streak of day;
 Its parting beams pale lustre shed,
 The shadowy veil of night is spread.
 Come, awful death! Hail, kindred gloom!
 For me no terrors shroud the tomb.
 In death—all worldly sorrows end;
 In death—the friendless find a friend;
 In death—the wearied seek repose,
 And life—release from human woes.
 At the glad summons, pleased, I'll fly,
 For who so friendless, fallen, as I?
 Revengeful man can ne'er invade
 The inviolable realms of shade;
 Ambition there can ne'er intrude,
 Nor malice, nor ingratitude;
 There mortal foes contention cease,
 Forget their feuds, and sleep in peace;
 Freed from his chains, the toil-worn slave
 Escapes from bondage to the grave;
 There, there I'll mock the tyrant's power,
 And triumph in my latest hour."

The work, "Ten Years of a Preacher's Life," gives the biography of one of the most remarkable and persevering of men, whether we consider the toils and privations he was called upon to undergo, or the perseverance with which he cultivated his other faculties to supply the place of sight, of which he was early in life almost totally deprived.

W. H. MILBURN was a preacher of the American Wesleyan Methodists, the training of whose ministers is not quite in the same style as in this country. They are inured to every hardship, have to look perils by land and perils by water calmly in the face and overcome them—make their bed often beneath the shade of a tree, on the grass of the open prairie, and occasionally on the soft soil of a swamp—"in all things approving themselves the ministers of God; poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." Hunger and thirst were common incidents to Milburn when he was first sent forth as a minister upon the Winchester circuit, of nearly three hundred miles, consisting of some thirty preaching stations; a route he had to make thirteen times every year, preaching each day. He was not altogether blind, else he never could have done this; he could, however, only see with part of the right eye, which retained the smallest possible point through which the light made its way, and this required to be shaded in a peculiar manner, in order to allow only the due quantity of light to enter.

Milburn gives in his book an interesting account of his efforts to educate the other senses, so as in great measure to obviate the defective sight. His blindness was the result of a blow from an oyster-shell thrown

by a schoolfellow, but happily before this he had learned to read, and in spite of the accident he became one of the most accomplished students of the Methodist College at Illinois, where he was prepared for the ministry. When first sent out to preach he went along with one experienced in the vocation to which he had given himself, but was utterly unprepared for the duty when first abruptly called upon to deliver a discourse. He stood up, frightened almost to death, behind a split-bottom chair, and his audience, to use his own words, were "a crowd of hunters and farmers, filling the cabin, who gaped and stared at a pallid, beardless boy. Of course, words were few and ideas fewer, and, on resuming my seat, I had the uncomfortable impression that that congregation had listened to as poor a discourse as ever was delivered." In his first year Milburn preached nearly four hundred times, and rode over 3,000 miles, chiefly on horseback; sometimes, during the rainy season, reaching his appointments by canoe, sailing along the road which he was accustomed at other times to trot over. It was "a scene of constant adventure or hair-breadth escapes; for, notwithstanding the sagacity of my horse, my piece of an eye was a poor substitute for the two good ones that had fallen to the share of my contemporaries; and in this wild, roving sort of life it could not be but that I should be especially exposed to peril. Nevertheless, it was a life full of hearty enjoyment, and of toil that inspired while it tasked one's powers."

In time Milburn became a popular and favourite preacher—welcomed wherever he went, and entertained as heartily as was possible for the straggling settlers to do. When he arrived at any appointed place he generally found an audience ready for him—few, but characteristically earnest and appreciative; and the sketches of places and points of character which our author gives in his book render it a very entertaining one, and show that, though almost blind, he had a power of observing character and studying human nature which is only equalled by his graphic power of delineation. His pictures of a prairie fire, of a market group in a backwoods town, of a knot of politicians round a stove, are all mysteries to one who knows he was all but blind. Milburn also gives notices of several remarkable preachers belonging to the connection, of their ways in and out of "meeting," of their method of conducting business in church courts, which are highly interesting and amusing; giving such details of the lives of these itinerant Methodist preachers, as cause the reader to feel a sympathy with their trials and privations, as well as wish them success in their endeavours to lighten up those dark places of the earth.

We quote the following sketch from his book as a specimen of Milburn's style. One of their preachers, named Cartwright, Milburn held in high estimation, and deservedly, for he was as fearless of man in the re-proving of vice and sin as he was physically able to hold his ground against any who chose to try their strength with him. He, Cartwright, had been deputed to attend a conference at New York, and a room had

been reserved for him at the "Irving House;" but arriving late at night, the sleepy hotel clerk did not recognize his name in the somewhat illegible characters which the backwoodsman inscribed in the register-book, nor Cartwright himself in the farmer-like looking man before him. The great preacher was therefore lodged very high up, and immediately below the tiles:—

"The patronizing servant explained to the traveller the use of the various articles in the room; and said on leaving (pointing to the bell-rope), 'If you want anything, you can just pull that, and somebody will come up.'

"The old gentleman waited until the servant had had time to descend, and then gave the rope a furious jerk. Up came the servant, bounding two or three steps at a time, and was amazed at the reply in answer to his 'What will you have, sir?'

"'How are you all coming on down below? It is such a way from here to there, that a body can have no notion even of the weather where you are.'

"The servant assured him that all was going on well, and was dismissed; but had scarcely reached the office before another strenuous pull at the bell was given. The bell in the City Hall had struck a fire alarm, and the firemen, with their apparatus, were hurrying, with confused noise, along the street.

"'What's wanting, sir?' said the irritated servant.

"'What's all this hulla-balloo?' said the stranger.

"'Only a fire, sir.'

"'A fire, sir!' shouted Cartwright. "Do you want us all to be burned up?' knowing well enough the fire was not on the premises.

"The servant assured him of the distance of the conflagration, and that all was safe, and again descended. A third furious pull at the bell, and the almost breathless servant again made his appearance at the door.

"'Bring me a hatchet,' said the traveller, in a peremptory tone.

"'A hatchet, sir?' said the astonished waiter.

"'Yes, a hatchet.'

"'What for, sir?'

"'That's none of your business; go and fetch me a hatchet.'

"The servant descended, and informed the clerk that, in his private opinion, that old chap was crazy, and that he meant to commit suicide, or to kill some one in the house, for that he wanted a hatchet.

"The clerk, with some trepidation, ventured to the room beneath the leads, and having presented himself, said, in his blandest tone, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but what was it you wanted?'

"'A hatchet,' said the imperious stranger.

"'A hatchet, sir, really! but what for?' said the clerk.

"'What for! Why look here, stranger. You see I'm not accustomed to these big houses, and it's such a journey from this to where you are, that I thought I might get lost. Now it is my custom, when I am in a strange country, to blaze my way. We cut notches in the trees, and call that blazing, and then we can always find our way back again. So I thought if I had a hatchet, I'd just go out and blaze the corners from this to your place, and then I would be able to find my way back.'

“‘I beg your pardon,’ said the mystified clerk; ‘but what’s your name, sir? I could not read it very well on the book.’

“‘My name,’ replied the other—‘certainly; my debts are all paid, and my will is made—my name is Peter Cartwright, at your service.’

“‘Oh, Mr. Cartwright,’ responded the other, ‘I beg you ten thousand pardons. We have a room for you, sir, on the second floor—the best room in the house. This way, sir, if you please.’

“‘All right,’ said the old gentleman; ‘that’s all I wanted.’”

After some years of toil in the backwoods, Milburn received the appointment of Congressional Chaplain in rather a strange way, and this forms one of the most interesting parts of the book. The incident which led to his being appointed to this office occurred on board the *Hibernia* steamboat, while sailing from Cincinnati to Wheeling. One Sunday morning, a committee of passengers waited upon Milburn, and requested him to preach, which he agreed to do. At the stated time a congregation of nearly three hundred passengers were waiting for him, amongst whom were several members of Congress, whose drinking, gambling, and swearing had, on previous days, shocked Milburn considerably. Towards the close of his sermon, the preacher could not refrain from addressing these gentlemen specially and particularly, and said, “As I have rarely seen men of your class, I felt on coming aboard this boat a natural interest to hear your conversation, and to observe your habits. If I am to judge the nation by you, I can come to no other conclusion than that it is composed of profane swearers, card-players, and drunkards. Suppose there should be an intelligent foreigner on this boat, travelling through the country with the intent of forming a well-considered and unbiassed opinion as to the practical working of our free institutions—seeing you, and learning your position—what would be his conclusion? Inevitably, that our experiment is a failure, and our country is hastening to destruction. Consider the influence of your example upon the young men of the nation; what a school of vice are you establishing! If you insist upon the right of ruining yourselves, do not by your example corrupt and debauch those who are the hope of the land. I must tell you that, as an American citizen, I feel disgraced by your behaviour; as a preacher of the gospel, I am commissioned to tell you that, unless you renounce your evil courses, repent of your sins, and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, with hearts unto righteousness, you will certainly be damned.”

Retiring to his cabin after this explosion of righteous indignation, to think over what he had said, there was soon after a knock at the door. One of the gentlemen who had been specially addressed entered and said, “I have been requested by the members of Congress on board to wait upon you. They have had a meeting since the close of the religious exercises, and they desire me to present you with this purse of money (handing him between fifty and a hundred dollars) as a token of their appreciation of your sincerity and fearlessness in reproving them for their misconduct.

They have also desired me to ask if you will allow your name to be used at the forthcoming election of chaplain for Congress. If you consent to this, they are ready to assure you an honourable election." This proposition, so creditable to both parties, Milburn agreed to, was elected, and soon after entered upon his duties as chaplain to Congress.

Comparatively young when thus promoted, Milburn had again to resume his itinerant life at the adjournment of Congress, eventually settling at Montgomery, where he was residing when he wrote his autobiography, to write which he had been strongly urged by the poet Longfellow, and another friend and blind author, Prescott, the historian. The book is dedicated to, "My wife, through whose eyes I have been enabled to enjoy the world of nature, and with whose tongue I have kept company with the great and good of all ages." As the work of a blind man, it is a curiosity of literature, and a good example of ingenuity and perseverance, apart altogether from its literary merits.

The finished works of the historians of the last century have been well paralleled in those of W. H. Prescott, author of the "History of Ferdinand and Isabella," &c., and are remarkable as proofs of what can be done by diligence and perseverance under circumstances of great difficulty. When studying at Harvard College, the playful throwing of a crust of bread by a fellow-student deprived Prescott of the sight of one eye, and the other suffered so much from his literary labour, that the author had to write his histories by the aid of a writing-case suited for blind persons. Some of his friends advised him to cultivate dictation, but Prescott preferred the writing-case. It consisted of a frame, traversed by as many brass wires as lines were wanted on the page; this was laid on the top of a sheet of carbonated paper, below which again was placed the white paper. The writer traced his characters between the wires on the carbonated paper with an ivory stylus, which made thus indelible marks on the white page below. Annoying mistakes would occasionally occur; for sometimes, when the author was proceeding rapidly with his work, he would discover that he had omitted to place the white sheet below, and that consequently all his labour had been lost. The manuscript prepared was read off to Prescott for correction by his secretary, who then copied it in a fair hand for the printer. The consulting of authorities was done through the services of a reader who did not understand Spanish. After toiling thus for some years, the eyesight of the author improved, but was still so imperfect that it was only available in moderation and by daylight. After about ten years of thought and labour the book was published, and was everywhere received as an important work, treating of a period of history which had till then received but sparing notice; and the extent of research displayed in its numerous references appears remarkable when the circumstances of the writer are considered, whilst the graceful and animated style was highly appreciated by critics generally.

Some years afterwards, Mr. Prescott produced a second work, "The History of the Conquest of Mexico," a clear, direct, and wonderful narrative, which afforded its author plenty of scope for his powers of description. This work was even more successful than Mr. Prescott's first, and was widely circulated in Great Britain and America, and translations appeared in Paris, Rome, Madrid, Berlin, and Mexico. In this book Prescott gives an account of the Aztec civilization, and such a narrative of the rapid conquest of Mexico as utterly destroys the fabulous and romantic accounts of preceding writers upon this subject. This production was followed by "The History of the Conquest of Peru," the result of careful research in valuable documents, which a former historian had not employed, although in this book Prescott has added but little to the statements of his predecessor. He subsequently published other works, all marked with the same care and order which distinguished his earlier books. For his last great work, "The History of Philip II.," which was intended to make six volumes, he was to receive £1,000 a volume from the English publishers, but the House of Lords annulled the bargain, because Prescott was not domiciled in England at the time of publication, and could not therefore claim the benefit of the English copyright law—an example of the injustice to which both English and American authors are subjected through the want of an international copyright. Had a proper arrangement in this respect been in existence, Mr. Prescott might have reaped even still greater rewards from his works. Latterly, Mr. Prescott suffered less from inability in his eyes than from dimness, and it seemed to him a warning that the time was not distant when he would require to rely entirely upon the eyes of another for the prosecution of his literary labours, or as a warning that the time was drawing nigh when they would close for ever upon this world. And so it proved. Two volumes of "Philip II." had appeared in 1855; and while the author was working at the third, which appeared in an unfinished state in 1858, he had a shock of paralysis, a second attack proving fatal on the 29th of January, 1859, after two hours' illness.

EDWARD RUSHTON, one of the minor poets of the eighteenth century, was born at Liverpool. Like many other boys brought up at seaports, he inclined towards a seafaring life, and accordingly made several voyages to tropical countries. On one of these he was attacked by ophthalmia at Dominica, and lost his sight by this before he was twenty years of age. He had good parts, and this deprivation making him more reflective than formerly, he began to compose songs and poems, which showed considerable ability. He latterly kept a bookseller's shop in his native town, and was well known there for his advocacy of the cause of negro emancipation, and such like humane projects. He wrote an "Ode to Blindness," which shows well his power of versification, and from this we extract the opening stanza:—

" Ah ! think if June's delicious rays
The eye of sorrow can illumine,
Or wild December's beamless days
Can fling o'er all a transient gloom :
Ah ! think if skies, obscure or bright,
Can thus depress or cheer the mind—
Ah ! think, 'mid clouds of utter night,
What mournful moments wait the blind !"

THOMAS BLACKLOCK, another sightless child of song of the last century, who attained a considerable fame from his poetical works, was born at Annan in Dumfriesshire. He lost his sight before he was six months old by an attack of small-pox ; but his father and other friends early cultivated his understanding by reading to him. Before he was twenty Blacklock was familiar with the great poets of former times, and was known and respected in his riper years as an excellent scholar, a poet, and a man of comprehensive information. He was of a kind and benevolent disposition, eager for knowledge, and as willing to communicate it to others, and was thus held in respect and love by all who knew or were brought in contact with him. He settled in a small house in the suburbs of Edinburgh, where he kept a select boarding establishment for young men attending school or college, although this was by no means the path of life originally designed for him ; but it was one for which, from his kind disposition and varied accomplishments, he was peculiarly adapted. Through the influence of what had been read to him by his father when young he was early induced to write himself ; some of these attempts had been seen by a gentleman in Edinburgh, who, when Blacklock's father died, took the young poet to the Scottish metropolis, and had him entered as a student of divinity. When he had received his licence to preach, Blacklock was, through the influence of the Earl of Selkirk, appointed parish minister of Kirkcudbright. The congregation, however, resisted the induction, and this led to a litigation which distressed the young minister so much that he resigned his appointment on receiving in its stead a small annuity. It was after this that he commenced the boarding-house in Edinburgh, where he continued till he died, at the age of seventy. He had an excellent wife, who assisted him in the care of his pupils, and whose tenderness and assiduity for his comfort Blacklock has elegantly embalmed in one of his most beautiful lyrics.

Blacklock's poetry has been styled "tame and commonplace," affording little room for criticism ; but he was possessed of good taste, and his apparent familiarity with the beautiful in nature is astonishing, when it is considered that the poet was one to whom all such things were hid. There is, indeed, throughout his poems an ostentatious use of descriptive passages and allusions to natural objects. His knowledge of these were no doubt derived from his early acquaintance with the best poets and studies of classic authors in his riper years. Blacklock's

poems contain many allusions also to the difficulties of his situation—his “rueful darkness” and “gloomy vigils.” He was the author of some sermons and other theological works,—“Remarks on Civil Liberty,” and the article “Blindness” in the “Encyclopædia Britannica.” An edition of his works was published two years after his death, prefaced to which was a biographical sketch of the author, written by Henry Mackenzie, the “Man of Feeling.”

Blacklock was the person who induced Burns to come to Edinburgh, and publish the second edition of his poems, thus causing him to forego his intention of proceeding to the West Indies; and Burns bears his testimony to the character of Blacklock, by saying that “he had a clear head and an excellent heart.” A great lover of music, Blacklock played the flute with considerable skill; and it is stated of him that he could distinguish the colour of objects at hand by touch. Altogether, Blacklock was a man of remarkable acquirements, and his case has engaged the attention and interest of the curious in no ordinary manner. His life was a peaceful and happy one, and in one of his poems he reckons up his disadvantages and his blessings, and finds that, on the whole, he has a large amount of gratitude due to the great Disposer of all events.

FRANCES BROWNE is a blind lyrist of our times, and a more remarkable instance of the poetic faculty existing under disadvantageous circumstances than that of Blacklock. The physical wants of Miss Browne have lent an interest to her poems and lyrics which is not needed to gain favour for them, for they possess beauty, gentleness, and grace, coincident with real merit and true melody, sufficient to gain for her verses a high appreciation, and has long since won for her a place amongst the sweetest female writers of the day.

Frances Browne was born in 1816, in a little mountain village of the county Donegal, where her father held the humble situation of postmaster; and when but one and a half year's old, she lost her sight by an attack of small-pox. Picking up her education by listening to her brothers and sisters as they read aloud their lessons for school, she followed the pursuit of learning with a steady determination to overcome. To gratify her desires in this way she bribed her young friends to impart to her their knowledge by telling them stories of her own invention, and in this way acquired much, amongst other things a knowledge of French. She soon began to write verses, but having got possession of Pope's translation of the “Iliad,” she thought her own productions so unworthy that they were all committed to the flames. When about twenty-four years of age she heard a volume of songs read, which at once constrained her to try and write a poem, “The Songs of our Land,” which was published in the *Irish Penny Journal*. Then followed other verses, printed in different publications, and she now began to think that she might yet win her own position in the world. Soon after, through the influence of friends

interested in her, Miss Browne received a pension from Government of £20 a year, and the Marquis of Lansdowne presented her with a gift of £100. Removing to Edinburgh, she there gained many friends, and began to write tales, essays, reviews,—in short, anything that was offered to her, and all in an able and conscientious manner. Her abilities gradually improved, though not so her prosperity; the struggle was severe and the burden heavy. During her stay in Edinburgh she published several volumes, one of which was dedicated to Sir Robert Peel, in grateful respect for his kindness in procuring for her the annuity from the Royal Bounty Fund. In London, whence she removed in 1852, her success was better, and she was enabled to employ an amanuensis for part of the day; and ever since she has continued to enrich the pages of many periodicals with her works, besides publishing several volumes.

The following simple verses, which may possess little of what may be called the higher order of poetry, are yet set to that music which genius alone can give us. They were suggested by a remark of an African chief to a missionary, and are entitled

“THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION.

“Thy voice hath filled our forest shades,
 Child of the sunless shore!
 For never heard the ancient glades
 Such wondrous words before.
 Though bards our land of palms have filled
 With tales of joy or dread,
 Yet thou alone our souls hast thrilled
 With tidings of her dead.

“The men of old, who slept in death
 Before the forests grew,
 Whose glory faded here beneath
 While yet the hills were new—
 The warriors famed in battles o’er,
 Of whom our fathers spake;
 The wise, whose wisdom shines no more,—
 Stranger, will they awake?

“The foes who fell in thousand fights
 Beneath my conquering brand,
 Whose bones have strewn the Caffre’s heights,
 The Bushman’s lonely land.
 The young, who shared my warrior way,
 But found an early urn,
 And the roses of my youth’s bright day,—
 Stranger, will they return?

“My mother’s face was fair to see,
 My father’s glance was bright,
 But long ago the grave from me
 Hath hid their blessed light.

Still sweeter was the sunshine shed
By my lost children's eyes,
That beam upon me from the dead,—
Stranger, will they arise?

“Was it some green grave's early guest,
Who loved thee long and well,
That left the land of dreamless rest
Such blessed truths to tell?
For we have had our wise ones too,
Who feared not death's abyss;
The strong in hope, in love the true;
But none that dreamed of this!

“Yet, if the grave restore to life
Her ransomed spoils again,
And ever hide the hate and strife
That died with wayward men;
How hath my spirit missed the star
That guides our steps above,
Since only earth was given to war,
That better land to love!”

Miss Browne says nothing in any of her works of her great deprivation; but it has evidently impressed itself upon her writings, which show a sincere sympathy with the sorrowful and the struggling and the poor of this world—a contempt for the mean and sordid, and a love for all that is good. Her subjects are varied, and her language is always indicative of a cultivated mind, chaste and expressive. There are touches of feeling in some of her poems, which show that they are the heart's utterances—attuned with a music which has filled the mind of the poetess with those images of beauty on which her eyes are closed. In the region of memory Miss Browne seems to have found her chief, though sad and shaded pleasures; and it would appear that the gifts which are seen in the delicacy and sweetness of her poetry have compensated in some degree for the deprivation to which she is subjected. Throughout all her poems there runs an under-current of warm-hearted cheerfulness, and a true, hopeful looking forward to that better land, where we shall see eye to eye, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

We here bring to a conclusion our notice of blind authors,—of those at least who have gained a place in the world of letters. Others there are who have gained a celebrity in different ways; for instance, Nicholas Saunderson, LL.D., Lucasian Professor at Oxford towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, who became blind from small-pox when only twelve months old. He attained a peculiar celebrity, and is said to have been able to detect from his fine sense of feeling true Roman medals from those which were counterfeit, and the methods by which he was able to solve the most difficult problems of geometry was only known to himself.

All the instances given show that Providence almost invariably compensates to a wonderful extent for the deprivation of one faculty by endowing another with additional vigour. Almost all of them give evidence of a great love for music; this generally constituting one of the greatest blessings which can be enjoyed by the unfortunate blind, affording them a cheerful solace in the midst of their isolation and gloom. How sad the change must have been for those who enjoyed their sight for many years, living in the light of day, and then passing at once and for ever into an atmosphere of darkness! How must their hearts have thrilled as they thought of that future life where they should enjoy a higher music than that they loved so well upon earth, and where their eyes would no more shut out the light of heaven, and the beauties of the little flowers.

W. T. D.



"OUT OF CHARITY."

CHAPTER VII.

EVA'S RESOLUTION.

So Eva's birth was now a secret no longer. It was no secret to herself. It was no secret to her friends. It was no secret to her enemy. Whether it did or did not continue a secret from the world was a matter too trivial to care for.

Some minutes after she had come to the end of that letter she placed it, as if it had been a note of the most unmeaning character, on the table which stood beside her. But she continued sitting still. It can scarcely be said that she thought. She could feel, but she could not think. She was just as one launched into a new and strange world, in which all is too novel and unaccountable to be grasped by faculties accustomed to things of so different an order.

Eva was roused by the voice of Mrs. Ballow outside her door. That lady rightly imagined that Miss March was now in full possession of all which Mr. Dowlas had written to Mrs. Ferrier, and she was deeply and affectionately anxious to administer the comfort which her young friend must be sorely needing.

"Eva, my dear," she called to her, "now do pray let me in. I won't trouble you for more than a single minute. But I must just bid you good night. You'll make me so uneasy if you keep me out,—indeed you will."

It cost Miss March an effort; but the effort was made, and she unbolted the door, and admitted her friend into the room.

Mrs. Ballow had concluded already, and with good reasons for the conclusion, that the discovery made by Mrs. Ferrier's means was of a most unwelcome kind. But of its exact nature, and of its probable effect on Eva, Mrs. Ballow was, of course, in utter ignorance. She was really

terrified at the look of settled dismay—despair almost—which she saw on the young girl's countenance.

"Good gracious, my dear! Why, what can it be that has distracted you in this terrible manner? My dear, don't be too hasty in believing it all, whatever it is! Mrs. Ferrier is a wicked woman,—a wicked, selfish woman. And she's capable of any falsehood, I do verily believe, that would separate you from her son; and the whole thing is her contriving, as you very well know. So we are not going to believe what *she* says."

"But, Mrs. Ballow, it is not at all what she says. This letter is written by somebody who has nothing to do with Mrs. Ferrier—one, at least, who *had* nothing to do with her."

"*Had* nothing to do with her! No. Somebody whom she has engaged—*bribed*, I shouldn't wonder—to support her in some ridiculous made-up story."

"Oh, Mrs. Ballow, why will you mock me with comfort which you know no rational creature could receive? I beg pardon, dear Mrs. Ballow; I forget what I'm saying. Of course you have not read this letter. Forgive me for saying what I did. But I'm satisfied that this story is true, and that my parentage is even worse than Mrs. Ferrier herself can ever have thought it."

"Oh, ah, I dare say the writer of this precious letter took the measure of this wicked woman's foot, and wrote accordingly. My dear, don't give in to them in this hasty way, at all events. Now just let me look at this ridiculous thing."

It would have taken some time to read the letter through and through. But it required but a minute or two to glance at and seize hold of the great leading facts contained in it.

Mrs. Ballow quickly found out what parentage Mr. Dowlas had attributed to Eva. She put down the letter with anger.

"My dear, I don't believe one word of it—not one word of it. One has only to look at you, and see that it can't be true. You shall hear Mr. Ballow himself say the same. You'll think something of what he says, if you won't take comfort from me. We'll look at it all to-morrow morning. And now, my dear, go to bed. Be this thing true or false, you must be tired and want rest."

"Yes, I *want* rest; but you can hardly think, Mrs. Ballow, that I am likely to get it. If Mr. Ballow cares to look at this letter, perhaps he will read it to-night. The sooner you leave me to my fate the better."

"My dear child, you really quite terrify me by the desponding way in which you speak. I've no doubt Mr. Ballow will read the thing at once if you wish him. We'll go into the parlour; really and truly, I don't like to leave you while you're so low as you are just now."

And they both went at once into the parlour. And Mrs. Ballow put the paper into her husband's hand for him to read.

He settled himself to peruse it from the very beginning ; neither Mrs. Ballow nor Eva interrupted him by a single word. The former sat in eager expectancy, awaiting the opinion which would come as soon as the document was entirely read through. Eva sat in the shadiest corner of the room ; she looked as one who already knows the worst, and who entertains no hope that that worst can by any means be bettered. Thus passed away more than a quarter of an hour ; for Mr. Ballow read slowly. He was evidently balancing in his thoughts the weight of each separate disclosure, and appraising its credibility, before he went on. There was perfect silence, except when the reader turned over page after page of the letter, and when Mrs. Ballow's impatience found relief in an audible gasp. At last the surgeon had finished. He folded the paper and laid it down, and his wife now felt that the obligation to silence need oppress her no longer.

“Now, then, Frederick, do you not think as I do—that this story is just an abominable falsehood from beginning to end ?”

Mr. Ballow hesitated before giving his reply.

“My dear, I am fully persuaded that the writer of this letter himself believes in the truth of all he writes.”

“Oh, do you think so ? However, you don't believe that it really *is* all true ?”

“On that matter, my dear, I am not prepared to speak so positively. You see, if you have read this yourself, that a great part of what is told—the only part, indeed, which need be of any consequence to *us*—is given as being merely told Mr. Dowlas by somebody else.”

“Certainly. Come, now, I'm sure you think as I do—that it's about the most improbable affair ever heard of, and that dear Eva would be insane to swallow the whole thing, and act accordingly,—as, foolish girl ! she seems half inclined to do.”

“It *is* a most improbable story, Ellen ; but very improbable matters do sometimes turn out very true. However, I certainly do see some things which require explaining—which ought to be explained, before we consent to take it as a proved thing.”

“There, my love !—There, Eva ! Now you hear what Mr. Ballow says ; and if you think that I only think what I wish to think, you won't say so of Frederick, I know. Now you really had better go to bed at once, my dear.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Ballow ; thank you for all your kindness, both at this and at other times. In a very little while I shall be in no situation to tax your kindness ; but I shall never forget it. Good night.”

She spoke with that quiet bitterness of tone which may be called resignation, but which can never be confounded with submission. And then she quitted the room.

“Now, my dear,” said Mr. Ballow,—“now I can speak more freely upon this painful matter—for painful it is, in whichever way we come to

view it. I could scarcely discuss it in Eva's presence. You know she has never been made aware of Mr. Ferrier's earliest adventure—I mean his rescuing the child (whether *she* were that child or no) out of Scarlington House."

"No. But does that letter profess to prove that she *is* the same child?"

"It does appear to do so, whether designedly or otherwise. And if I knew no more than was known to this poor woman—this woman who claims to be Eva's own mother—I should feel it very hard to doubt that she *is* the mother. You seem to have only just glanced at the principal facts in the paper. You may not have noticed that, if there be any kind of truth in it, your uncle Ferrier greatly mistook the real meaning of what he saw in Scarlington House that night. The man and woman who, as he supposed, were combining to make away with the poor child, were really combining to take it in, and, as it would seem, to impose it upon the world as Mrs. Campion's child. Not, of course, that we are justified in making any public use of Mrs. Campion's name."

"But everything combines to fix the matter, one way or other, upon those Campions."

"Certainly; but it might be none the less difficult to obtain a confession from *them*. We had better keep to such openings as we can avail ourselves of. As I was going to say, poor Mrs. Roberts appears to have had no idea that her baby, instead of being at once received into Mrs. Campion's family, was really snatched away—from destruction, as he thought—by your excellent uncle. Mr. Campion must have known that the child he consented to place in Mrs. Roberts's hands was not his own, or can we believe he would ever have cast her off? And it is very possible that Mrs. Beakham, the nurse who took the baby to Scarlington House, might never have known how mysteriously it was taken away. She might very easily not notice it as she passed through that parlour again. At all events, she was discreet, and said not a word to the child's real mother. But we, of course, know that if that same child really was brought up by Mrs. Campion until she was just four years old, she must have been taken from that nurse in Hammersmith (where your uncle placed her), and by some very ingenious deceit indeed palmed off as Mrs. Campion's own child."

"Yes; but do you really think that such a deceit could possibly be managed? It appears to me that such a trick as that would be ten times more difficult than the other."

"You are quite right, Ellen; and I shall be very slow to believe in it. Only, you see, there is really only a choice of difficulties for us. And it does appear, from what your uncle has left on record, that Mrs. Campion heard of the child whom Mr. Ferrier was supposed to have rescued from some ditch between Fulham and Hammersmith;—that she showed so much interest in it as to make particular inquiries. And we do not know how far deceit, once entered upon, may be carried forward. That nurse,

Mrs. Markley, may have been heavily bribed to give up the infant entrusted to her charge. She would very easily, I should think, get hold of some other stray foundling, whom she might impose on your uncle as his own *protégé*; or the story of the child's death may have been a fabrication altogether. Her sudden disappearance had, certainly, a suspicious look. It would be a great satisfaction could we but get hold of this woman; but I fear that satisfaction is now quite out of the question. I greatly fear that she is dead."

"Indeed! Then you have actually made some attempts to find her? Why, Frederick, I never heard you mention that."

"No, my dear; I thought it better not to tell you. Not that I doubted your discretion, my dear; it would argue ill for my own good sense if ever I had. No, but I thought it as well not to torment you with any half-finished plans. So—it was nearly five years ago—just about the time when we met that red-faced woman in the Exhibition—I put one or two advertisements in some London papers, and also sent several to be inserted in Australian journals—for to Australia, you know, the woman, at all events, *said* she was going. I went so far as to make a few inquiries through one or two of our friends who have relatives in Australia. The advertisements never brought me any reply of any sort. I did get a letter from Sydney, informing me that such a person as Mrs. Markley was known to have come out there about the end of 1838; that she was supposed, many years ago, to have gone back to Europe; that she had, at all events, disappeared from Sydney; and that, moreover, she left the place a widow, as she came. This was all I could ever make out as to Mrs. Markley."

"But perhaps, Frederick, she was *afraid* of coming forward."

"I scarcely think *that*. I put the advertisements—the wording of them, that is—very cautiously. But I do greatly doubt if the poor woman ever had any cause for being afraid. If she did give the child out of her hands, she was guilty of a gross breach of trust. For such an act she must have had some inducement; and that inducement must have at least included money. There was the risk of your uncle's finding out her treachery. She would feel certain that the people who wanted the child had some very peculiar motive for the wish. She must have been quite aware that what they wanted was not a child merely, but this particular child of all others; for they might have possessed themselves of some other infant in a much easier and safer way. And Mrs. Markley could not know but that your uncle was aware of much more than he chose to tell her, and was well aware, if anything happened to the child, in what quarter to direct his suspicions. So altogether, if Mrs. Markley were indeed a woman to prefer her own interests before the claims of truth and honesty, I do think she would have felt it her interest to keep faith with your uncle Ferrier, and would have kept faith with him accordingly. If she did, why, then we know that the child he gave into her

keeping died when but a few months old, and our young friend's parentage is just as unaccounted for as ever."

"Of course. Well, Frederick, it is a relief to me to know that you think so. Then why not act upon this belief?"

"Because, my dear, there is really very much to be said the other way. We, at all events, must identify Eva with the little girl *afterwards* adopted by your uncle. And what I read here, mysterious and unaccountable as much of it is, tallies very well with one or two things, also very obscure and unaccountable, which we have both read in Mr. Ferrier's manuscript. I certainly have heard that Mr. and Mrs. Campion have but one daughter, who (as her parents are separated) lives with her mother, and that they are not known ever to have had another child but her. Only it is very difficult to get any definite tidings about them; they seem to have sunk somehow out of the world's sight. I can imagine it possible that some audacious impostor, who had a child of which he desired to be rid, employed Mr. Campion's name, and sent that little girl for Mrs. Roberts to receive as her own. But you see how conjectural is all this. I fear, if we consulted any one who had no bias in this matter, he would tell us that we are but resisting an inevitable but unwelcome conclusion, and that Miss March can be no other than the child of that unhappy Mrs. Roberts."

"Oh, impossible, Mr. Ballow! I never will believe it! What! the daughter of a *convict* father, and, to say the least, a most incautious and imprudent mother? Why, only just look at Eva, before you assign her such parents."

"Those parents, my dear, had no such advantages as hers. They had no such protection as your excellent uncle's. They had no such example as that of your excellent uncle's more excellent niece. When we would praise people, we should take their circumstances into account."

"Oh, ah, I see. You mean my uncle's niece would have had little excellence but for having, in her turn, so excellent a husband. I thank you, Mr. Ballow."

"Well, my dear, it's a general rule. Apply it as you like. Once again, I say that I do see great improbability in this story of Mrs. Roberts, though I acquit *her* of all untruth. But, setting one improbability against another, I fear we have at present no good case against her claim. Let us go to bed at once, my dear; I'm sure we're both heartily tired of this matter; and I only fear it will tire us a great deal more ere we have quite done with it."

And to bed they accordingly went.

If the Ballows rested not well that night, you may be very sure that it would not be a very tranquil night for poor Eva. The discovery—for it never occurred to her at this time to doubt its reality,—the discovery entailed upon her a worse embarrassment than she could ever have expected. She had thought, from time to time, that she might find her

parents among the poor and lowly, and might thus be called to exercise humility. She had confessed to herself that she might find them amongst the faulty and degraded, and so might have to exercise a forbearance and forgiveness. Now, however, she stood revealed, the child of a mother at once guilty and innocent, at once a victim and a transgressor.

Mrs. Roberts's misfortunes had been too directly the fruits of her own folly to entitle her to unmixed compassion, and too little of her own contriving to condemn her to unqualified abhorrence. Her daughter must pity her, and she might find it hard to divert her pity from every admixture of contempt.

With the universal propensity to think that every possible position of matters would have presented fewer difficulties than the actual one, poor Eva suffered much more that night than in the whole previous course of her existence.

Towards morning, however, she obtained a little rest, and when she awoke she was able to look at the matter before her, if not with more of pleasure, at least with greater calmness. In one respect, at least, she thought her duty lay straight and clear before her.

She must go to her mother. She must now begin to be all, and (if possible) more than all, that she could have been to her had she grown up under her mother's eye. It was not for her to evade a daughter's duties, because estranged from her mother since her birth. That estrangement ought hardly to be attributed as a crime to her mother; at all events, it had secured to Eva a far better education, a far better entrance into the world, than her mother could possibly have given her.

Eva's clear, strong sense was asserting itself, even in the unforeseen and baffling contradictions of her present position. To live with her mother would for a season involve the detested presence of her aunt, Mrs. Dowlas. But this need not be for ever, nor for long. Had this been all, the heaviness which weighed upon Eva during the night might have given way in the morning to something like joy.

But then it was not all. There was another great matter, and that was—Richard. To think any more of him would be worse than breaking a promise of her own. It would be asking him, or alluring him, to violate the promise given to herself. It would go nigh to justify all that even Mrs. Ferrier was likely to say against her. That lady's immense efforts to keep Richard and Eva asunder ought by this time to be known in every circulating library throughout the United Kingdom. But she herself never knew how successful she was just at this crisis. She did not know how greatly the thought of Richard's mother supported Eva in the resolve to give up her hopes of Richard. Pride sustained the cause of duty from its possible surrender to the claims of love. And poor Eva made even a miserable pretence of thinking that there was something to be thankful for in that she should never call Mrs. Ferrier her mother-in-law. And

when she joined her friends at breakfast they really wondered at her extraordinary calmness.

They had scarcely breakfasted when Mr. Dowlas presented himself. As in all affairs in which the Dowlas family intermingled, our own friends were very glad that the reverend Welshman came unattended by his wife.

There were few, if any, who admired Mr. Dowlas as he deserved. Suffering and martyrdom are frequently more interesting and picturesque when they are contemplated from a distance. If voluntary endurance makes a martyr, Mr. Dowlas was assuredly one, and many a saint to whom cathedrals have been reared, and before whose altars candles are burning day and night, has endured a great deal less than Mr. Dowlas had long endured. Moreover, his patience rarely received its merited praise. His acquaintances, of both sexes, set him down for a poor, craven-hearted man, who could not venture to assert his domestic rights. In this they very much wronged him. Mr. Dowlas submitted to his wife's temper, not because he lacked the courage to rule his household, but just because he possessed the rarer faculty of ruling his own spirit. And that spirit was naturally high. As he would say to a very few of his more intimate friends, "My wife's unhappy temper will be curbed by no common authority. My unfortunate error in marrying her has left me with the alternative of being her tyrant or her slave. I believe that my natural heart would incline me to tyranny; but I have thought it better for the honour of the gospel I preach—better for the welfare of my children, so doubly dependent upon me, better for that future life to which I humbly look forward—that I should allow myself to be a slave." Thus the submission which even many who esteemed Mr. Dowlas considered as a guilty sacrifice of duty to ease, was really and truly a daily mortification, undergone from a sincere endeavour to walk as best became him.

Such was the Reverend Morgan Dowlas,—a man in whose speculative creed you might find abundant flaws; a man entertaining his full share of the mistakes and narrownesses which beset his order; a man the great sacrifice of whose life it might not be difficult to represent as a monstrous blunder; but still a man whom nothing could turn out of the way which he deemed appointed for him.

In the conversation which ensued on his arrival, Mr. Dowlas besought Eva, with as much earnestness as he felt justified in employing, not to turn away from her newly found mother.

"I cannot promise, Miss March," he said, "that in making your home at Llynbwllyn you would enjoy a very happy one. My wife's temperament is—is of a somewhat impulsive character. But I do ask you, in pity to your poor mother, to come to us for a time. I trust you would not find your stay an entirely unpleasant one; and you and your mother could decide together as to your future course."

"Does my mother then so much desire to see me?"

“I do not exaggerate when I tell you that I believe your refusal would almost be her death. At least, it would be necessary to break it very slowly to her. I have been told by very good medical authority that any sudden shock of surprise might prostrate her reason at once. I had great fears from the agitation through which she has gone during the past week or two.”

“Do you mean, then, that my poor mother has ever been affected in her mind?”

“Not exactly so. Yet her escape from such a misfortune has been really marvellous. I am speaking the exact truth of poor Susanna when I say that she has been all her lifetime subject to bondage. She has fallen into evil hands through sheer weakness of will and decision in herself. I declare to you, Miss March, that you may believe her when she says that in parting with you at your birth she meant, in her weak way, to do the best she could for you; and she meant as well when she tried to reclaim you.”

“Mr. Dowlas—uncle Dowlas, if you will let me call you so,—I believe it is my duty to go to her, and I will go.”

“But, my dear,” interposed Mrs. Ballow, “will you not consider the matter a little more fully?—Pray, Mr. Dowlas, when must you return home?—to-day?”

“Yes. I fear I cannot delay beyond this afternoon. My duties require me to be at home to-morrow evening, and I have left my eldest daughter with some friends in Liverpool, and Mrs. Dowlas has a great desire to go from Liverpool to Bangor by water. I fear I must set off by the train which leaves Leamington at three to-day.”

“Then,” Mrs. Ballow replied, before Miss March could come out with any answer of her own—“then, if Eva decides upon accompanying you, she will meet you at the station in good time for that train. That arrangement, I suppose, will not be objected to?”

“Certainly not, ma’am. Of course, I’m well aware that it’s but a short time to decide on so important a matter.” And Mr. Dowlas got up from his chair, and was about to say Good morning. Eva, by a gesture, detained him.

“May I—may I,” she said, “ask you just one question, Mr. Dowlas?”

“I will do my best to answer any question you choose to put, Miss. Pray what is it?”

“It’s a hard question—hard, I mean, for me to ask. In that paper which you wrote for Mrs. Ferrier, and which you afterwards put into my hands, there is mention made of—of somebody besides my mother.”

“I know, Miss. You mean your—in short, you mean Mr. O’Cullamore.”

“Yes, I do. Can you tell me what has befallen *him*?”

“No, Miss March, I cannot. I trust, though it’s a sad sort of thing to say before you, that I never shall hear anything more of him. I have

never heard of his death, and I certainly never heard of his coming back to England. He is very likely living in Australia still. At any rate, he will hardly present himself before you or your mother, and it can never be your wish that he should."

"No, no, indeed! I should feel that to be a most dreadful thing. I hope and trust it is not wrong in me to say so."

Mr. Dowlas now took his leave, and the great subject was discussed between Eva and her two faithful friends. Mr. Ballow, adhering to his opinion that Mrs. Roberts's story was susceptible of a very opposite inference, yet acknowledged that many things appeared to identify Eva with the infant who so strangely fell, in the very first hours of her life, into the hands of Mr. Ferrier. He therefore inclined to the belief that Eva was judging aright when she felt it her duty to go with the Dowlas family that day, and he urged his opinion upon Mrs. Ballow.

"You see this, my dear," he said,— "by insisting on some further proof of the story—by referring, for instance, to Mr. Campion himself—Eva *might* (to say the least) be doing a great injustice, and acting with what would appear like a sullen hardness. Now by going to see the person who is probably, though not certainly her mother, she can do no injustice to anybody, and *may* be taking the only right and good way which lies open to her."

How sensibly, as all will surely acknowledge, was this decision put! How grievously fallacious it was destined to prove! Eva, convinced that she could not escape from owning herself to be Mrs. Roberts's daughter, was rather comforted in thinking that, by acting accordingly, she could do nobody injustice. There came a day, and that was not very long in coming, when she writhed bitterly at the thought of the injustice which, in taking this course, she wrought against the innocent.

But the future is not given to us to read. And, considering with what little profit both the past and the present are often perused by us, were it not outrageous in us to aspire for a knowledge so far too excellent for us? Eva made up her mind to set out for Wales along with her newly found kindred that very afternoon. Mr. Ballow approved, and Mrs. Ballow withdrew her disapproval. They promised that no effort should be wanting to make further inquiries, and to ascertain the truth beyond a doubt. Meantime, their home at Minchley, to which they would return on the Monday, was as freely open to her as to any daughter of their own. She might calculate on a hearty welcome whenever (which was likely to happen only too quickly) she found her uncle's house unpleasing to her. A very sufficient sum of money was put into her hands, and she might at any time obtain any reasonable amount for any needful purpose.

No more was said, and the necessary preparations for her departure were commenced at once. But there was yet something harder to be done. There was a farewell interval with Richard. He came shortly

after Mr. Dowlas had departed. He besought Eva to ignore and cast aside the supposed discovery as the joint invention of his mother's prejudice and Mrs. Roberts's madness. Eva dared not do this. She felt the proofs to be strong enough to outweigh many more improbabilities than she actually detected in the story. Richard bitterly called upon her to testify how faithfully he was observing his promise. Eva had strength to say that she knew he would as religiously keep it always. And so they parted, exchanging the vows, not of mutual constancy, but of a mutual surrender.

“Your mother is very right, Richard,” she said. “I, a poor girl, who must blush for at least one of my parents,—I ought never, knowing what my origin would very likely prove to be—I ought never to have thought of being yours.”

“Eva, I shall never be what I was before I knew you. I will never forgive my mother until she repents of her treatment of you. And I'll know no rest until all obstacles to our happiness are removed.”

He went out defiantly hopeful. But in Eva's own heart the thought was strong that the happiness of all her future life was gone out with him.

It made her far more indifferent than she would otherwise have been to the probable discomforts of her new life.

What mattered it whose she was to be, if she could not now justly aspire to be his?

When the Dowlases, husband and wife, arrived at the station that afternoon, they found Eva already awaiting them, under the escort of Mr. Ballow. On her two boxes she had written the name of “Miss Roberts” with her own hands. For such a name she felt she must now resign herself to bear through life,—alas! too surely, *through life*.

They started on their way, and arrived at Liverpool that evening. Rebecca Jane was fetched away from the friends with whom she had spent the interval occupied by her parents in visiting Leamington. She was presented to her cousin Eva, and *with* something at her cousin Eva's hands. When we last beheld her she was about seven years old; she was now entering her thirteenth year. She was really a much nicer child than, with such a mother, you could have expected her to be. To do bare justice to Mrs. Dowlas, she was much less savage to her children than to her much-enduring husband. She had her own system of education. It was briefly comprehended in giving her children their own way altogether until they were six or seven; in assuming a sort of spasmodic severity towards them as soon as that age was attained; and in giving them up as hopelessly vicious when they entered their teens. Rebecca Jane was accordingly just now passing out of the purgatorial stage into the stage of final reprobation.

Mr. Dowlas grew in favour with Eva the more she saw and heard him; but her horror of her new aunt was increased in a greater ratio still. The supper of which they partook in the Liverpool hotel involved one dreadful

revelation, and Mrs. Dowlas's red face, loud voice, and bravado manner proved all to be referable to one vulgar and degrading cause.

They were to start by the steamer in the forenoon of the morrow. The total change of place and of associates had really a most consoling influence on Eva. It seemed to place the dreadful parting of the previous day at the distance of several weeks. Perhaps the disgust with which almost every word and act of her aunt inspired her was, at this time, of service to her.

The Saturday morning came. Mr. Dowlas went out before breakfast, and came back with the account that the wind was fair, and that a calm and rapid passage might be expected. So Mrs. Dowlas gave her final decision for making the journey by water instead of by land. As the time for departure drew near they gathered their packages together, and prepared to walk towards the steamer.

"Take care, my dear," said Mr. Dowlas to his daughter; "you'll bring upon yourself a very strong remonstrance from your mamma if you lose that shawl."

"That she will, I promise her! That she will, I promise her!" answered the red-faced lady for herself. And then, with a celerity which argued long and varied experience, Rebecca Jane dodged round the table as her mother approached her. In all due time they were on board and sailing down the Mersey into the Irish Sea.

Mrs. Dowlas had treated herself to a breakfast, very varied as to quality, and very satisfactory as to quantity. A hint thrown out by her husband as to coming dangers ensuing therefrom had been by her most scornfully slighted and despised. The sea, when they got into it, proved not quite so placid as had been expected. Therefore it is no such great wonder if, before the firing of the gun which announced their passing off Great Orme's Head, Mrs. Dowlas was about the most suffering of all those suffering people whom that steamer contained. Rebecca Jane was about as much to be pitied as her mamma; much more so, indeed, if the greater pity be due to the greater patience. Eva was not decidedly ill, though not entirely well. Mr. Dowlas did not suffer at all; not, that is to say, in his own individual stomach. His wife provided ample suffering for him out of that which fell to her own share. Some twenty times he was screamed for down into the cabin, to procure or administer some imagined remedy. As many times, also, he was screamed away back again, as one whose presence was more sickening than the sea.

About two in the afternoon (I think it was) they entered the Menai Straits, passed nigh to that bridge, one of the wonders of its own time, but now superseded by so many greater wonders; and finally they came to Bangor. And Eva saw mountains for the first time in her life.

Mrs. Dowlas, very far from well even now, crawled up from the cabin, and prepared to go on shore. Sea-sickness had played fantastic tricks with her florid complexion. The bilious yellow and the fiery red united

to form what an artist would have considered “a study.” She really appeared (it is a shocking simile, I am aware, but it is the best which occurs to me)—she really appeared to be throwing up her very words.

“You murderous wretch!” she exclaimed, as her husband proffered his assistance to her. “You murderous wretch! To tell me that we should go so smoothly and so well!”

“Well, I am sorry, my dear. But, really and truly, the wind got suddenly up just after we started.”

“Got up after we started, did it? My goodness me, Rebecca Jane! But you do deserve whipping, if ever a child did! Now, then, come along with you! Don’t make it worse, but come along directly!”

More dead than alive, and with houses and hills dancing before her eyes, as though chaos were come again, and the earth were but another sea, Rebecca Jane attempted to walk from her seat on deck to the pier hard by.

The moral agency of her mamma’s example, and the physical agency of her mamma’s knuckles, sustained her in her first efforts, and some assistance from her cousin Eva accomplished the rest. And very shortly they were all four of them inside an hotel facing the beach.

Mr. Dowlas ventured to propose a short walk to his wife; which proposal she acknowledged by desiring him, if he did indeed wish to kill her, to take a knife and do it at once.

Mr. Dowlas then proposed that they should go out by themselves, and leave her to benefit herself by a little rest. To the proposition, returned in this amended form, she told him that, if he were really brute enough to leave his wife while she lay at the point of death, it was a great deal better he should go. Mr. Dowlas, with his two other companions, did go. But before he went he ordered dinner for the party. They rambled about for more than an hour, looking in at the cathedral, and ascending an eminence near to the town. When they came back to the hotel they found Mrs. Dowlas not only still alive, but very demonstratively alive, and calling out for bottled porter. And then they dined, and towards evening started off in an open chaise for Llynbwllyn.

That village, the destined scene of new and unimagined trials to our heroine, lay somewhere between Bangor and Carnarvon. But for a few English ramblers, who haunted it summer after summer, Llynbwllyn would have been the *Welshiest* place in all the Principality.

It stood girt with sheltering mountains, very beautiful, though not, perhaps, so beautiful as are sundry nooks which lie more southward, in Merionethshire. But we write of Wales with a little diffidence, and unaware whether our memory be true to that country after an absence of eighteen years. But we cannot forget entirely. We forget not ascending Cader Idris, and watching on the top, through the prolonged twilight of midsummer, to see the far-stretching coast of Wales, and (if we might believe our guide’s assurance) even the coast of Ireland in the distant west—lighted up with the morning sun.

Our friend and companion of that night is now a Cambridge Don, and likewise a member of the Alpine Club. Should he, by any unlikely chance, cast his eye on this page of ours, he will forgive this personal allusion, we are assured, and will cast his thoughts back to that night on which he, ourselves, and the guide—and eke a fourfooted personage of the name of "Nip"—awaited, on the cold mountain's top, the arrival of the king of day.

Through the cloudy summer's evening, and slowly, from the steepness of the roads, the chaise bore Eva and the three others towards the personage of Llynbwllyn. They entered the village, and Eva's heart throbbed painfully fast at thinking she was going to meet a mother whom she might in vain endeavour to love. They stopped before the door. A middle-aged woman was ready to greet them. Could she be Mrs. Roberts? But a word or two from Mr. Dowlas informed his niece that the woman was only their servant Winifred.

Winifred Williams had served in the family many years. Her long service was a perpetual puzzle to all who knew the character and temper of Mrs. Dowlas. How came it that Winifred, whose excellent qualities entitled her to pick and choose out of the most eligible places, was contented to serve where so little was to be gained, and where even that little was spoilt by the detestable mistress of Llynbwllyn Rectory? The true answer should be given, in justice to Winifred. She remained there in self-denying consideration for her master and his children. She was not withheld from seeking a better service by a blindness to the merits possessed by herself. A genuine pity for her master's most unhappy life, and a wish to lighten his load if she could, induced her to tolerate the discomforts from which many a less accomplished servant had turned in disgust away. But, alas! not to the best amongst us is it given to be Christians altogether. Mrs. Winifred was submissive enough to her mistress, who might turn her away in any moment of anger. But she was not nearly so patient with Mr. Dowlas and his sister-in-law, compassion towards whom (and towards the children) was her only motive for enduring such a mistress.

It was this good woman, and I do not believe she had much idea of being better than other people,—it was she who admitted them into the house. Mrs. Dowlas was tired and sleepy, and a little less ready than usual with her tongue. Mrs. Roberts, as Winifred informed them, was anxiously awaiting them in the parlour.

Mr. Dowlas whispered to Eva as they went in, "I know your mother is very poorly, from her not coming to meet us; pray excite her as little as you can."

They entered the parlour—Mr. Dowlas first, Eva directly after him, while Mrs. Dowlas and her daughter lingered in the passage.

A pale, frightened-looking woman, dressed like one recently widowed, got up from her chair to greet them. Eva came towards her; she held

out her arms, as if to receive her long-lost daughter. But before they touched Eva they were withdrawn with a low scared cry.

Then recovering once more, Mrs. Roberts kissed Eva and cried over her.

"You are not like him," she said; "you are not at all like him!—should he ever come back to do me justice, he may not believe you are his child. But I thank you for coming to me, notwithstanding; and, indeed, indeed, my poor dear child, what I did, cruel as it seemed, was done for the best—for the very best."

"There you go!" exclaimed her sister, who now had entered the room. There you go! For ten years and more you've been looking for the rascal to come back and marry you. Why, what if the wife he had when you went away with him be really dead now? Very likely he has twenty others by this time. Oh, what a fool you are, Susanna!"

Eva tried to say a comforting word or two to her mother.

"I know," she said, "that you did the best you could for me, and I have met with the kindest friends, and had a very happy childhood, so you have nothing to reproach yourself with. Let us try and make one another as happy as we can."

But poor Mrs. Roberts, with the weak waywardness which had made her the dupe of others through life, went on maundering about the man whom she had once considered her husband.

"He would do me justice if he could but see you now," she kept repeating to Eva; and Eva devoutly hoped that, whatever fate had overtaken her unhappy father, he might never come back to disturb her mother more deeply still. Least of all could she desire to see her parents bound together by a still closer bond than before.

"Come, now, have you almost done talking? for I want my tea."

From whom this seasonable interruption proceeded we need hardly specify. And, in truth, such talk as poor Mrs. Roberts kept up was little likely to serve any useful purpose. So it was broken off on account of tea, and they all retired early to bed. Eva had a very small but clean apartment, looking out on the Welsh hills; and but that her thoughts would fly backwards to Leamington, she might have found something not unlike happiness in the resolve to bear with the infirmities of her mother, and with the more guilty infirmities of her aunt, and to follow in the path of duty which her new and strange circumstances might indicate to her.

The next day was Sunday. There was morning service at Llyn-bwllyn Church—in Welsh; and (in consideration of several English sojourners now abiding there) afternoon service in English.

Eva attended both. There was a collection in the afternoon, as was usual during the visitors' season in every year, for the expenses of the church. Eva could not help thinking her uncle's appeal a model of pulpit solicitation. Having ended his sermon in the usual manner, he quietly

said, "We are accustomed to ask strangers who attend this church to contribute towards the salary of the clerk and of the sexton. And I think when you learn that the clerk has only one pound a year, and the sexton nothing whatever, you will be liberal in supplying the deficiency." There was one piece of gold in the plate that day.

Little or nothing which deserves recording took place for a week and more after Eva's arrival at Llynbwlyn. It was a thankless task, the offering to comfort her mother; for the more she urged on the poor woman to forget the past, the more loudly and dolefully did she persist in deploring the folly which had blighted her life. When Mrs. Dowlas would angrily interpose with, "Oh, you *are* a fool, Susanna!" Eva, great and increasing as was her dislike of Mrs. Dowlas, could understand that her temper might have acquired some of its acidity from the constant contact with her sister's aggravating feebleness.

It required more patience in Eva to endure her aunt's vicious taunts, when (as was frequently happening) her mother was alone, and nursing one of her customary headaches. Eva had rapidly acquired the good-will of her young cousins; there were four of them altogether, including Rebecca Jane, and as many more of them had died in infancy, or in very early childhood. But Mrs. Dowlas was rather resentful than grateful for the kindness with which Eva had sought and obtained the children's affection. The woman had an instinctive belief that she was an object of general contempt, and she was very jealous of the popularity her newly found niece was winning in the household, and would be likely to win wherever she became known.

Her greatest satisfaction was to address obliquely, through her eldest daughter, the abuse she did not venture to cast more directly at its object.

"Rebecca Jane," she would say, when a long series of covert sarcasm had failed to provoke a return from Eva—"Rebecca Jane, I do hope to goodness that you'll never get into the way of sitting sulky hour after hour, and never speaking when you're spoken to by others. It's just the most unbecoming habit you could have." Or else it would be,—

"Rebecca Jane, if any rich lady or gentleman should ever take a fancy to you, and give you a bringing up above your station, don't *you* set yourself up on that account, and give yourself conceited airs, when you're sent back to come and live with your own relations again."

Or occasionally the lady's humour would break forth in a manner which indicated some preparation beforehand. As, for instance, in this manner,—

"Rebecca Jane, do you know what it looks like when young ladies sit still and don't talk?"

Rebecca Jane, timidly looking askance at her cousin Eva, said she was sure she did *not* know.

"Then I'll tell you, Rebecca Jane. It generally betokens—when a

young lady looks glumpy and what not—that she has had *an attachment*. My gracious heavenly me, Rebecca Jane! If ever I find you out in an attachment! But do you know what it is?"

"Yes, I think I do, mamma."

"I don't believe you do, however, you little confidential monkey. Well, now, just let me put it before you. Suppose you were a very pretty young lady—or thought yourself a very pretty one, of twenty years of age, or no—we'll say of eighteen—eighteen years and four months, let us say" (and Mrs. Dowlas chuckled audibly at the ingenious sarcasm of her hypothesis), "and if some young gentleman were to ask you to marry him; what should you do then?"

"I should go and tell papa," said Rebecca Jane, after a moment or two of consideration.

"Go and tell *mamma*,' any decent girl would have said, I suppose. But it wouldn't make you turn up your nose at the relations you'd got already, I should hope? Never let anybody teach you to be proud, Rebecca Jane. There are people in the world that have got vagabonds for their fathers, and yet are proud with it all. Don't follow every bad example you may come across. I tell you what, child, giving you all this advice has made me quite exhausted. You must get the bottle out of the cupboard."

Thus Eva was now quite at home.

On Tuesday, the 29th of July, Mrs. Dowlas astonished Eva by coming down to breakfast in a mood most marvellously amicable. She suggested, of her own accord, that while the weather was fine, and the days long, Eva should take an excursion or two, and acquaint herself with some of the beauties which are the most enduring glories of Wales. Suppose Eva and her mother were to spend that day and the next in visiting Llandudno and Conway, and the other most northerly places of the Principality, making Bangor their head-quarters for the night? Eva gladly seconded the proposal. Mrs. Dowlas might have some selfish and secondary motive for thus proposing, but there was no visible reason for refusing to gratify her if she had. Mr. Dowlas approved, but his wife seemed more than usually anxious to keep him out of the conversation this morning. Mrs. Roberts was prevailed on to undertake the expedition, and she and her daughter spent an almost happy day among the mountains and along the shore. In the evening they put up at the hotel in Bangor, in which Eva had rested on the day of her arrival in Wales.

It wanted still an hour or so to twilight, but the rain was coming on, and they looked on their day's excursion as over.

But the great event of that memorable day was (for both of them) to come still.

They had had their tea, and were seated—the one of them quietly, the other nervously—in a private room that looked towards the sea.

And Eva was indulging in the hope that a whole day spent in the

manner above described, and apart from that horrid aunt Jane, would leave its mark of permanent good on the temper and tone of her poor wayward mother.

But she was very quickly disappointed.

"I hope, mother," she said, "that this has been a pleasant day to you."

"Yes, Eva," sighed her mother, "it has certainly been a *pleasant* day;" as though the pleasantness of it were just the most deplorable fact in the whole case.

"But you feel tired now it's over?" Eva went on.

"Tired, Eva? I feel ashamed. I feel I have been doing very wrong. I've spent a whole day in idle amusement. I won't say it's wrong in you. You are young. But for me, who may—I do not know how soon—be called to leave this world, for me to spend a day in only looking at beautiful scenery and such things,—oh, I've been very foolish, very wicked, in coming on this idle journey; and really I can't get over it."

"I'm very sorry you should allow yourself to think so, my dear mother. I am certain you are wrong. I am sure you torment yourself with useless fears, with needless scruples. But I would not have persuaded you to it if I had thought it would trouble you, as it seems to do."

Poor Mrs. Roberts made no immediate reply, but began to cry silently, as she lay reclining on the sofa. To torture herself with baseless scruples had been the unhappy practice of this poor woman through all her life. The gloomy notions as to piety and duty, which had waited on her early years, had inflicted on her this fatal weakness of spirit. She had been for ever running into wrong, from her very fear of doing wrong. The bolder nature of her sister had quickly burst through the restraints of her early teaching; but, in bursting through them, had broken from all religious restraint altogether. And yet their mother, whose mistaken teaching had, in different ways, issued in such immense mischief to her daughters,—that mother had meant nothing but good in all she did.

Nor had she lived to see much of the evil.

"Eva," said Mrs. Roberts, after a pause of nearly five minutes, "I wonder if there is a church open here this evening? It would comfort me very much if I could go. I shouldn't feel as if I had dissipated *all* the day."

"Well, I fear there hardly can be. I suppose there's daily service—twice a day at the cathedral. But that must be much earlier."

"Perhaps there may be a chapel open. But oh, I suppose you would not go with me to *chapel*?"

"I would *rather* go to church at any time. But I'll go anywhere you wish with pleasure."

"Then let us ask if there is any sort of chapel open here this evening."

The inquiry was made of the waiter, who had brought in their tea. By him the inquiry was passed on to the mistress of the house. It could not be answered quite favourably.

The landlady herself came to tell our friends that she knew of no place of worship as likely to be open. Indeed, she was tolerably sure that no such thing was obtainable that evening in Bangor.

She was going out at the door when she suddenly came back.

“It has just come into my mind, ma’am,” she said, “that there is a sort of religious meeting going on this evening at the Town Hall. Perhaps you would find that better than nothing.”

Mrs. Roberts caught at the alternative eagerly, and before any account of the nature and object of the meeting had been given her.

“Do let us go, Eva.—What is the meeting for?”

This the landlady could not exactly tell. Something about Popery, she understood. Mrs. Roberts hurried to get ready, for the time of the meeting was nearly arrived. And Eva was glad to gratify her at so small a sacrifice of her own comfort.

It was a rainy evening, and the Town Hall was not so full as, under a more propitious sky, it might have been found. At the door an immense placard announced that the chief topic of the evening would be an exposure of the immorality of the Popish priesthood, and the abominations of the Romish confessional. The speaker, from whose lips the exposure was to proceed, was announced as Mr. Murphy M’Quantigan.

Eva and her mother sat for some amongst the audience, awaiting the coming in of Mr. M’Quantigan and his supporters. And just as a stamping of feet and clapping of hands announced that the chair was being assumed in proper form, Eva was startled by seeing her mother fall back almost fainting on her seat.

There was some delay and bustle in getting her out. But once in the open air, she revived sufficiently to walk back to the hotel, which stood at no great distance. Once there, she sank on the sofa with a look and manner that indicated something much more serious than any fanciful illness.

“Eva,” she said, “do you—do you think he would see me? I saw him.”

“Whom? Whom do you mean, mother?”

“Oh, don’t ask me. I forgot! No, ask me nothing. You wouldn’t like for me to tell you.”

Eva looked and felt bewildered as well as alarmed.

Then, recalling to her mind the character in which her wretched father had appeared nearly twenty years before, in Liverpool, she was struck with a terrible suspicion of the truth.

She whispered an inquiry into her mother’s ear.

“I tell you, you had better not ask me,” her mother again replied. And now, of course, Eva felt her suspicion confirmed beyond a doubt.

The man now in Bangor as Murphy M'Quantigan was the Bryan O'Cullamore of years gone by—the deceiver of poor Susanna Roberts, and the very father of Eva herself.

Pressed by one more inquiry, Mrs. Roberts admitted that indeed it was so.

Eva procured medical aid for her mother that evening. The doctor whom she summoned pronounced the matter to be somewhat serious. The patient, he said, could not meet, without immense risk, such a shock to the nerves as she had evidently just now received. The sooner she returned home, to live in all possible quiet, the safer for her condition. Most thankful was Eva that, early next morning, her mother was able and willing to start off homewards. Yet more thankful was she that no message or visit from her wretched father occurred to trouble them.

Perhaps he had not recognized his victim, whom he had once falsely called his wife. His daughter he had never once beheld, and was probably unaware that any such child had been born to him. In any case, he had motive sufficient to make him shun them rather than pursue them. Still, as Eva, seated in the open car beside her mother, left Bangor behind her, she did feel fearful lest the event of the night before should be the herald of coming trouble.

And trouble, indeed, was hard at hand. And Mr. M'Quantigan was not destined to be without his share in it. But the *great* cause of the coming evil was not to be in her unacknowledged father; not in any one person or circumstance with which her previous life had made her familiar.

The storm was to burst from a very different quarter from any on which it was at all likely that her anxious eyes would be fixed.

Ere long it was to come upon her. We are about to describe certain other events which assisted in preparing its approach.

CHAPTER VIII.

BETWEEN ENGLAND, NORMANDY, AND WALES.

THE houses in Pimlico Terrace (in the neighbourhood of Belgrave Square) are so absurdly like one another, that it would require some study of any one exterior to obtain for it a distinct existence in your mind and memory. No. 20, for instance, has little or nothing, to the casual eye, to mark it from No. 19, or from No. 21. It might be otherwise with a constant caller at the house. If, in the year 1856, you had come across any such person, he could have told you that the aforesaid house was, for the present, occupied by a Mr. Champion. Had the knowledge of our imaginary informant extended from the house to its master, he might have told you that this Mr. Champion's Christian name was Gerald; that he was forty-five years of age, and per-

haps a trifle over; that he was married to a lady who for some years past had retired into a seclusion only intelligible on the ground of extreme ill-health; that Mr. Campion's whole family consisted of this afflicted wife and one daughter; that this daughter was now just eighteen years of age; that she was not remarkable either for beauty or for the reverse of it; and that Mr. Campion divided his time between London, the Continent, and his country house, giving generally a larger part of the year to the last than was allotted to the two former put together.

Mr. Gerald Campion had spent many years of his manhood in a Government office. Some special circumstances, which may be more fitly explained by-and-by, had altered his position when he was a little over thirty, and had given him the virtual possession of a great estate. If you care to know about his appearance, he was rather tall and very thin. And you might see without much looking at him that he was somewhat sickly. But it was that kind of sickliness which often carries length of days in its hand, and triumphs in the issue over boastful health. Not sitting in Parliament, Gerald Campion was at liberty to take care of himself, and he did take care of himself. Not because he was remarkably selfish, but because he was decidedly nervous. He was a fussy man. A man of intellect shrewd and shallow at the same time. A man who could be satisfied with small successes, and amused with very small witticisms. He was the kind of man who chooses to be mistress as well as master in his house. And this desire, from his wife's condition, he had a rare facility for obtaining. He was the sort of gentleman to whose coat every housemaid longs to attach a dishcloth.

Especially dear to Mr. Campion was the good old practical jest of writing “Slut” with his finger in some undusted corner. He was always doing it at home, and that with a keen mental relish which no repetition could render stale. No impassioned adorer was ever less weary of carving the name of his loved one on the trees or on the rocks.

However, in greater matters Mr. Gerald Campion both bore a good name and deserved it. He was very attentive to his wife, although for three or four years past she had been much more a burthen than a comfort to him. He had been a very tolerable father to his daughter.

From one or two causes, which also we may leave for future explanation, Emily Campion had not been fortunate in her home, or in the influences which filled it. And I count it as much her misfortune as her fault, that her father just at this time was greatly and reasonably uncomfortable about her. She was (it could be no secret to any but strangers)—she was more than ready to entrust her future life to a young gentleman very little older than herself, and whose early and reckless extravagance promised ill for his future that was to be his own.

The small estate to which young Rupert Larking was heir, and the large estate to which Emily Campion was heiress, were both alike in the county of Somerset. Thus the two young people (their united ages were

not quite forty years) had long been country acquaintances. The London season of 1856 had, most untowardly in every prudent eye, brought them into mutual contact in town. Emily had come out, and Rupert had come of age.

He was just the young man to propose a marriage in defiance of parents, prudence, and all *et-ceteras* of the kind. And Mr. Campion was not very sure that his daughter would repel the idea with its merited abhorrence.

It was on the twenty-fourth of July, being the Thursday preceding the latest events of our story, when something came to Mr. Campion's ears about his daughter, which prompted him at once to remove her from London, and (as far as might be) from all possible pursuit by her lover. Some time afterwards, when altered circumstances had enabled Emily to speak freely of this critical day, she acknowledged that an elopement into Scotland had been projected, and would have been carried out that very evening. Mr. Campion was enabled to anticipate and baffle the treason, from a hint supplied him by his footman. That footman, it may be said, had a grudge (the grudge of attachment proffered and declined) against Miss Campion's maid, the chosen confidante and companion of the intended expedition. We can never be sure that the currents of our own lives, smooth them as skilfully as we may, will not be crossed and disturbed by the worse managed course of other people's affairs. If Basanio had fixed on the wrong casket, not only would he have lost Portia, but for Gratiano and Nerissa too all life must have been a blank. And such disturbing influences, though often coming from above to below, do at times, as with Rupert and Emily, originate in a level below them. Jane preferred William to John; and the heir of Charlwood Manor was kept asunder from the heiress of Deverington Hall.

Great and terrible was Emily's dismay when, very early that evening, her father announced his intention of taking her abroad that very night. The two were to travel alone. Jane was to be left behind, and to be turned away the very next morning. And poor Emily was in the train with her papa, with London behind her, and the green fields in front and beside her, before she felt quite certain that she was not in some dreadful dream. Mr. Campion made no open allusion to the cause of this hurried journey. His daughter, however, felt sure from his manner that he had found her out. So she ventured to put neither objections nor inquiries to him. She had just asked him whither they were going, and he had shortly answered, "To your aunt at Dieppe." And very little else was said between them at all.

Mr. Campion was, of course, very angry. He had heard so many stories unfavourable to Mr. Larking,—of such extravagance as would beggar him in a twelvemonth,—of the companions in whose society he was supposed to find his chief delight. But, rightfully angry as Mr. Campion was, I do believe he found more than compensation in the good fortune

which had averted the irreparable ruin. His fussy disposition quite revelled in the thought of the prompt and skilful manner in which he was vanquishing the danger altogether. And beneath his real displeasure there was a lurking sense of something like gratitude to his daughter for providing him the opportunity of showing how well he could manage in all emergencies. The little circumstance that another's eye, and not his, had detected that any emergency existed,—this escaped his consideration altogether.

Their journey, eventful enough in its origin, was fraught with ultimate events of the most important kind to several persons together. But in itself it passed as devoid of incident as ever a journey could be. There was prospect of a still and quiet passage from Newhaven to Normandy, a promise not at all falsified, for the sea was almost as a lake that night.

They reached Newhaven just as it was growing quite dark. A solitary, *cut-off* looking place did it appear at that time. Emily sat crying in the hotel, and her papa dawdled and fidgeted about inside and outside until it was time to go on board. He purchased a *Daily News*, which after perusing he handed to his daughter. In the last moment of preparing to depart she swept it into the bag she carried in her hand. Had she left it on the table instead (and she was as likely to have done the one as the other), the journey would never have issued in the great events it actually brought to pass.

Before eleven at night they were steaming out of the harbour and into the Channel; and morning, as beautiful as morning ever came, was shining out of the east when they reached the shores of Normandy.

Poor Emily felt more than ever like one in a horrid dream. The tranquillity of winds and waters on that night has spared us the anguish of again chronicling such misery as, only six days before, the voyage from Liverpool to Bangor had involved.

Still, the two travellers on whom we are now in attendance felt all the physical discomforts inseparable from that beautiful, but uncomfortable hour of the day.

They took some rest in the Hotel de Londres. The place was not new to either of them, and had it been so, they were thinking of other matters than sight-seeing. Some time in the forenoon they took breakfast in a restaurant in the Rue Grande.

If this page should have any readers who are total strangers to the Continent, let us warn them to abstain from touching the French coffee; for if they touch it, they will never, as a rule, enjoy a cup of coffee in England.

However, when they had breakfasted, Mr. Campion and his daughter went out towards the abode of Emily's aunt.

That aunt was her mother's sister. Her name was Lady Dalby. She was the widow of a baronet, and had been left with an income scarcely of a piece with her social rank. Hence her long and continued

residence on the Continent. She had no family, all her late husband's children having been the issue of his previous marriage. Her brother-in-law found some trouble in discovering her, as she had quitted the house in which he had previously visited her, for one of the houses which faced the sea. After one or two inquiries, Mr. Campion was directed to a certain house upon the cliff. Like the neighbouring houses, it stood in a garden, that garden being shut off from the road by an exceedingly tall gate, which, however, did not shut the garden from sight. An elderly-looking woman was gathering a few flowers near the gate, when Mr. Campion and Emily came up to it.

The gentleman put on his very best French wherewith to address his questions to this woman. Not a little to his surprise, she returned the answer in English,—in English as decidedly English as was Mr. Campion's French.

"Yes, sir, Lady Dalby lives here, and she is at home. Will you walk in?"

Mr. Campion would walk in. Lady Dalby occupied the first floor of the house. The Dieppe season was just at its height now, and the other lodgers were many.

The woman whom he had seen, and who conducted himself and his daughter up-stairs, was her ladyship's own servant. And before many minutes they were greeted by Lady Dalby herself.

She was a thin, faded woman. She was not happy in her banishment from London life, which her narrow means imposed upon her. And her time was prone to be a very great weariness to her.

And a visit from friends in England was, as on this day, a source of great and real pleasure to her.

"Dear me, Gerald! Well, upon my word, this is a treat indeed, and a most unexpected one too. And Emily, too!—My dear love, how are you? I don't think you look very well, I must say. What does your papa think?"

Papa gave the answer for himself. "Well, yes, indeed, Bertha; I do not quite think that London has agreed with Emily lately. As you observe, she looks a little pale."

Poor conscience-stricken Emily! There was anything but paleness in her cheeks as she drooped under her father's covert rebuke and her aunt's awakened curiosity. But Mr. Campion was not so spiteful as (I am sorry to say) fathers not seldom are, and he did not worry her any further.

"If you will excuse its being done so suddenly, and can receive Emily here for a little while, I purpose to leave her with you," he said to his sister-in-law.

"Oh dear! I'm always ready to see her at any time. Most happy, I am sure; and I do think the air of this place might set her up."

"Just so, Bertha; and thank you, I am sure. Then would you

allow your servant to show her at once to her room? I find you have an English servant."

"Oh yes; Madame Durange is English. I always call her *Madame*. Oh yes, you are right. And she is a rather superior woman; has been I don't know where—all over the world, I believe."

"She does appear a clever woman. She found out that I was an Englishman—I can't conceive how—the very moment I began to speak to her. I suppose, Lady Dalby, there's a sort of something which an Englishman carries about with him that marks him at once with any one who knows us at all. But will you let her just attend to Emily for a little while?"

"Of course, certainly." And Madame Durange was summoned at once. She was a bronzed-looking woman, and might be a little under fifty, at a rough guess. There was a quick, ready look about her, as of one whose experience of life had been great and many-sided. Miss Campion quitted the room with her; and on one arm she carried the bag in which the newspaper purchased yesterday had been hastily thrust by her. Mr. Campion began the conversation with Lady Dalby, for which he had procured his daughter's absence.

"There is nothing," he said—"there is nothing very serious the matter with Emily. You see, her mother cannot look after her, as a girl at her time of life requires looking after. And she has been entangling herself in a very foolish affair; a—a very undesirable attachment. I've no doubt that a month or two here will put it all out of her head. I think the less said about it the better."

"Oh, decidedly, to be sure; yes. Well,—and I was just going to ask about poor Eliza, only I gather from what you just said, that she is no better than when I heard from you last?"

"No, I am sorry to say there's no improvement. I fear, indeed, she is getting worse. I have had advice from all quarters; and I need not tell you that anything recommended would be done at once. But poor Eliza—she won't allow of anything being done. She won't go into society; she won't go to any watering-place; she won't so much as come here. I do believe the very presence of me, or of Emily, makes her feel uncomfortable. Being alone (the doctors all agree in that) is just the worst thing for her. And yet it's just the thing she seems bent on having."

"Most astonishing! Why, I remember her, and so must you remember her, as one of the gayest of the gay; I'm sure, when we were girls together, to be alone for one hour would have been the greatest possible punishment to her. Not that she was often obliged to bear it; for you know her lively, clever ways made her very much sought after. What can you imagine to be the cause of it?"

"That, indeed, puzzles everybody. The medical men talk of the action of the mind upon the body; and they hint that some secret

worry may be troubling her. I see no reason for thinking so myself. What could it possibly be, you know?"

"Why, what indeed? But really, my dear Gerald, if I were in your place I should impress on Eliza that it is quite a duty to rouse herself; a duty she owes both to her husband and to her daughter. I should be quite peremptory, and insist upon it. I declare, indeed, I should."

"Well, Bertha, of course you must suppose it's all very distressing to me. But if I ever speak to Eliza, she does look so unhappy; so like a poor creature who is losing her reason (though I am assured on the best authority that her reason is *not* affected), that I really,—really, I haven't the heart to say all that it might be proper to say. Besides, I think I told you before that any agitation might have serious consequences."

"Well, it's a most deplorable state of things. And for Emily, an only child and an heiress, so doubly deplorable."

"Why, yes, Bertha. But, by the way, I am inclined to think that Emily thinks too much of being an heiress. You know enough of our family matters to know that her position is not altogether so sure a one. It would be no harm at all if you now and then hinted the thing to her. You're discreet, I am aware, and will say no more than it is right she should hear."

"No; you may fully rely upon me. I quite understand. I was going to ask if you had seen, or heard of, your brother very lately."

"I see him very seldom; and I hear not very often. I don't think he will ever settle down in England again. He is well, or was when last I heard from him. He travels about everywhere, and rests nowhere."

"Dear! What a blight seems to have fallen upon him! And pray, (I know it's a painful subject, but we are alone together now)—pray, has anything lately been heard of *her*?"

"Nothing, nothing whatever. She receives her income every year; and lives—nobody appears to know where. Some suppose that she lives in a convent. But we don't know; and we systematically abstain from inquiring."

"Well, indeed, that seems the properest course. However, you feel sure that she is still alive?"

"'Alive,' Lady Dalby!" And so startled was Mr. Campion at her question, that he startled her greatly by his vehement repetition of it. "Of course, we are sure that she is alive! I do beseech you, Bertha, not to be so fanciful and imaginative! Well, excuse me; only, you see, the whole affair has been so very painful, that—that—you know—that any new idea is vexatious to us. That's all, you know."

"Oh, well, it was only a passing thought; a very foolish one, perhaps," answered the lady, who saw that she had somehow made her brother-in-law look very uneasy. Then she went on to something else.

"And the poor unfortunate child. What, after all, became of her?"

"She was decently cared for; and my brother said he had reason to

hope she would not suffer for the sins of others, after all. I don't think he has ever inquired about her since. I never have."

"I suppose your brother had the fullest assurance of her not being his child?"

"The fullest he could have. I am very sure that nothing short of it would have ever convinced him. But she confessed it herself to him; confessed it in the amplest manner with her own lips, in his hearing, and in that of another."

"How shocking, to be sure!" And any further comment which Lady Dalby may have been ready to make was prevented by the re-entrance, at this point, of her niece. She was to be left for an undetermined period in the custody of aunt Dalby.

Her papa would return to England by the packet which went that very night, or at a very early hour in the morning.

He took a stroll with Emily about the town and its environs that afternoon. On returning to the house which held Lady Dalby, they found her looking as if something had slightly vexed her. But what it was (if it was anything at all) she did not think proper to tell them. Late at night Mr. Campion walked away to the harbour, and to the vessel which was to bear him back to his native shore. He was soundly asleep ere she left the harbour, and the cliffs of Sussex were full in view ere he was thoroughly awake again. They were nearing the harbour, and the passengers were gathering on deck, to be ready for landing, when Mr. Campion's eyes met a sight that struck him with great surprise. The marvel was Madame Durange. She was standing, basket in hand, and must of course have quitted Dieppe along with himself. Lady Dalby had hinted nothing whatever about it. What meant this sudden journey? Could his troublesome Emily have been at the bottom of it?

Mr. Campion thought he should like to know. He went up and accosted the woman.

"Are you leaving Lady Dalby entirely?" he asked of her.

"Not at all, sir. I'm only taking a journey to England. I shall be back within a week."

"I didn't at all expect to see you here, Madame."

"Nor did I expect it, sir, until yesterday."

And looking again at the basket in Madame's hand, Mr. Campion saw projecting out of it the very newspaper which, when seen by him last, was in the hands of his daughter.

The woman saw that suspicion was stirring within him, and she pulled the newspaper out, and pointed to a particular advertisement.

"That, sir," she said, "is what has made me anxious to get to England."

The advertisement ran after this fashion:—

"If Mrs. Markley, who lived in *Radish Gardens, Hammersmith*, in the month of March, 1888, and at the aforesaid time and place took

charge of an infant, will communicate with Mr. Frederick Ballow, of *Minchley*, in *Buckinghamshire*, she will find it to her great advantage. She is earnestly entreated to give the advertiser a *personal interview*; but if that be out of her power, to address a letter to him without delay. To meet her wishes any reasonable arrangement will readily be entered on."

Mr. Campion read the advertisement very attentively indeed. Then he returned the newspaper to Madame Durange.

"Then are you," he asked her, "at all acquainted with this Mrs. Markley?"

"I was that Mrs. Markley myself, sir," she replied. "Not that I have any idea what people can be wanting to know about the thing after all these years. The young lady gave me this paper to look at yesterday, and it was a surprise indeed for me to see myself in it, though under my old name."

"Then your first husband was an Englishman?"

"Yes, sir. And I was left a widow at the time I nursed the baby spoken of in the paper here. I never knew whose it was. I understood that the gentleman—indeed, he was a clergyman from somewhere in the country—who put the child into my hands had found her cast away somewhere. The poor little thing died; and just after that my brother, who was gone to Australia, sent to ask me to join him. I went there, and got a very good place. But I didn't like the country. I suppose I was rather too fond of change. So when one of my master's daughters married a French gentleman, who liked Australia as little as I did, I took service with them, and came to live in Paris. I married there; and my husband left me a widow after I had only been married about a twelve-month; and for the last two years and more I've been living with my Lady Dalby. And so you see, sir, that accounts for my never hearing about the matter until now."

Mr. Campion listened to her every word with an attention evidently prompted by a lively interest in all she said.

Then he spoke in his turn. "Lady Dalby is aware of your intention?"

"Certainly, sir. She was a little put out by my wanting to come just when she happened to have company, you know, sir. But I was very urgent about it; you know, sir, there's no telling how it might make against me if I did not come forward when wanted, whoever may be wanting me; and so I urged it upon her ladyship to let me come at once."

Mr. Campion was considering—considering something which took up all his thoughts for that moment.

He put his next question in a tone and manner which proved that he was looking Madame through and through.

"Pray tell me, Mrs. Markley—Madame Durange, I ought to say,—

when you go down to Minchley, do you stop in London by the way?”

“No, sir, not if I can help it. I should like to get there as early as I can.”

“‘Not if you can help it!’ Well, I was going to say, Madame, that if you meet any friends, I should be glad—that is to say, I should be obliged to you, if you would not mention my having met with you; nor, in fact, say anything about my daughter’s visiting Lady Dalby; in short, not mention our names at all. It would be her ladyship’s wish, I know, as well as my own.”

“Of course, sir; I won’t mention it on any account.” And the woman appeared greatly wondering why so small a favour should necessitate so long an explanation. They drew away from one another, and had no further conversation. But they watched each other, nevertheless. Madame Durange, especially, had a wondering, puzzled look upon her face; a look that suddenly gave way to a start of recollection, as when something lost from the memory returns in all its freshness.

Mr. Campion looked, on his side, as if he should very much like to know more about her errand in England.

Then, before long, they landed. And he got into a first-class carriage, and the object of his curiosity into a second-class carriage. And a momentary glimpse at London Bridge was all they afterwards saw of one another.

Mr. Campion went back to the house in Pimlico Terrace, and a few days later to Deverington Hall. We shall have the honour of calling on him at the latter place by-and-bye, but for the present we must follow in the steps of our good Madame.

She had knocked about the world too much to be flurried by a sudden journey. She went down to Minchley by an afternoon train; and just as the Ballow clock, as much in advance of the age now as ever, was pointing to five minutes past six, Madame Durange was walking out of the Minchley station, baggage in hand, and asking for Mr. Ballow’s house. Everybody knew it, and she had very little difficulty in finding it. Just as she got to one door a handsome young gentleman came out of it, leaped into a gig that stood by, and set off towards the station, to catch the train to London. That young man, as you will anticipate, was our special friend Richard Ferrier. He and Madame exchanged a momentary look. There could not be much in common between those two. And it was the unlikeliest thing of all that, meeting as they did, they should each be thinking of one and the same subject. But that unlikely thing was a fact. Ill-assorted pair as anybody would have reckoned them, an exchange of their present ideas would have been of the deepest interest to them both. But no such exchange was made, and the door had closed behind Richard ere the late Mrs. Markley had time to step forward and ring the bell.

When, in answer to her summons, it was presently reopened, she asked if Mr. Ballow were at home.

Mr. Ballow was at home, but he was just going to dinner. M. Durange's widow carried no such things as cards about with her. But, as we said, she did always carry her wits about her. She took out the newspaper which had so accidentally come under her eyes, folded it with Mr. Ballow's advertisement uppermost, pointed it out to the servant, and asked him to show it his master. The boy could read, and saw that Mr. Ballow's name appeared in it.

"Tell Mr. Ballow, if you please, that I've come about *that*, and am ready to tell him all I know."

The boy took it in, and left her waiting at the door. She was not doomed to wait very long. Mr. Ballow came quickly out, and Mrs. Ballow followed him, with an excitement and curiosity which defied repression. The name of the visitor had been on their lips at the very moment she came in. They had just had a doleful interview with Richard. And he had been impressing them with the unhappy certainty that, on disproving Eva's connection with the Roberts family depended his every hope in the world. Mr. Ballow had been forced to acknowledge at what a disadvantage the death, or disappearance, of Mrs. Markley had placed them. She, if it lay in the power of any creature at all, could furnish the assurance, beyond mere assertion, that the infant found in Scarlington House, and committed to her keeping by Mr. Ferrier, had really ended its existence within a few months of its birth.

Mr. Ballow could not hold out any lively hope of ever finding her. Poor Richard was well-nigh desperate. He said he would do anything, spend anything, suffer anything, could he but undo the terrible mischief which, partly in malice and partly in ignorance, had been wrought by his mother. He was distracted to find some method of untying that knot which could only be cut by a positive breaking of his word. I do believe that nothing in earth, sea, or sky, is so deplorably helpless as a man when crossed in love. Feminine helplessness is, in comparison, the very perfection of self-dependence. Our Richard clung to the Minchley surgeon as never a drowning sailor clung to a spar.

Mrs. Ballow was, as became her sex, the more sympathetic of the two. Besides, she was very eager that Mrs. Ferrier's detestable trickery should be robbed of its wrongful triumph. So she tried to modify her husband's discouragements by her own more sanguine ideas. She hinted that Mr. Ballow's cautious character inclined him always to understate his hopes; that any case in his profession, of which he did not quite despair, might always be looked on as a hopeful one. And Captain Ferrier might apply the rule to the very different case in hand. I fancy Mrs. Ballow justified herself against any possible charge of exciting delusive hopes by the *arrière pensée*, that, if nothing should be left but for Richard either to give up Eva for good, or to break right slap through his ridiculous

promise, he would be worse than a fool if he hesitated long over the latter course.

Of such a kind had been the interview of that afternoon. Good-natured friends though they were, I do think the Ballows were a little bit tired. But none the less did they hail the new and opportune arrival.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Ballow, "I do wish Captain Ferrier had been here! Just gone only this very minute! I wonder if there would be time to call him back? Shall I tell Thomas to run to the station as hard as he can?"

"My dear, I think not. You know we can communicate with him at any time, and at very short notice. I should like to make sure of our ground beforehand. Recollect there may be nothing certain even now."

Then Mr. Ballow addressed our unknown visitor. "My good madam," he said, "we shall be very glad if you can afford us any information. I beg your pardon, but I am not aware of your name."

"My name, sir, is Madame Durange. But my first husband's name was Markley. And I am *the* Mrs. Markley spoken of here, sir."

"Then pray tell us all you can at once. But first you must have something to eat. I suppose you have come from some distance?"

"My dear, pray let Mrs. Markley come in and have some dinner along with us."

The Ballows were quite alone; and there was nothing in Mrs. Markley's dress or manner which made her noticeably unfit for their company. So they had her in, and she partook of dinner with them. The all-important conversation was proceeded with during the dinner and afterwards,—of course, at each time in the absence of the servant.

Mr. Ballow's earliest questions were put with a view to ascertain whether it was indeed the true Mrs. Markley, and no pretender to the name, who was at present sitting along with him. Those questions we need not rehearse. Suffice it to say that they were answered satisfactorily and well. Sundry little notices of details tallied so exceedingly well with Mr. Ferrier's famous manuscript, that there was no fair room for doubting but that the woman who could tell so much was now at last in their presence. And, what was also important, she betrayed no sign of having anything to conceal. Mr. Ballow was satisfied already that her conduct in the whole matter had been upright and truthful, that the baby whose death she had alleged had really and truly died; and that the identification of Eva with the mysterious infant of Scarlington House was a baseless fiction; and that between her and the Llynbwllyn family there was no manner of connection. We may just add that, with the full conviction of this in his mind, Mr. Ballow still thought and spoke of our heroine as Eva. Nor was there any inadvertence in this. For (though Mr. Ferrier had not recorded it in his manuscript) she had been conditionally baptized as "Eva," after her adoption by him in 1842.

Mr. Ballow, we say, was satisfied in his own mind. But that was of

very little moment. Others must be satisfied. The world must be satisfied. Poor Mrs. Roberts must be satisfied. There must be such proof of the death of her child as would detach her from her Eva with her own acquiescence. Thus only, it was pretty certain, would Richard and Miss March be ever made a happy couple.

Mr. Ballow, accordingly, proceeded to inquire whether proof of the death would be readily forthcoming.

Madame Durange assured him that all had been ordered in a legal and decent way.

"But, Madame, you may not be aware of it, but there are persons, not otherwise than respectable persons, who have doubted that the child under your care died at all. Don't for a moment imagine that I share the opinion myself. But it is the opinion of some, and I greatly wish we may be able to contradict it."

"Certainly, sir, I can altogether contradict it. I should not be likely to say the child died if it did not. "Why, sir, I was paid, and very handsomely paid, to take good care of it, as I hope I should have done anyway. But the gentleman, Mr. Ferrier, paid me very well indeed; it was not my business to ask why he took such an interest in the little thing; but all I could do was of no use, and the baby died. And, in justice to myself, sir, I may tell you that Doctor Osprey, whom I had in more than once, assured me that he very much wondered I had managed to keep it alive so long as I did."

"I need no further assurance, as I have already told you, Madame Durange. But I want to convince certain other persons who are likely to be a little more obstinate. Is this Dr. Osprey alive now, do you know?"

"That, sir, I cannot possibly tell. It's very likely he may be. He was only a middle-aged man at the time, and it is but eighteen years ago."

"Can you remember where he lived at the time?"

Madame recollected the street, but not the number: he had lived in Hammersmith. It was a matter to be inquired into by-and-bye.

He went on questioning the late Mrs. Markley.

"As I am putting inquiries to you which you must think very curious ones, Madame Durange, I will partly tell you why they are made. Mr. Ferrier, whom you remember, was my wife's uncle, Mrs. Ballow's uncle. We had, in after years, the charge of a young lady whom he had taken under his care. And an idea has got into some people's heads that this young lady is the very baby nursed by yourself. This, you must see, is a most annoying and vexatious thing to the young lady herself, and to all belonging to her. And we are exceedingly anxious to show that the notion is just an impossible one, as you and I, of course, know already."

"Well, sir, other persons in the house saw how ill the poor child grew, and saw it after it died. And the burial and all was done in the regular way."

"Yes, Mrs. Markley (excuse me, I forgot you had changed your name). But then there are always persons who will take up any idea rather than believe what they are not inclined to believe. And there are people, or at least there is *one person*, who *will* maintain that this young lady is the child you nursed, unless we can make the matter so clear that no rational creature could think otherwise. The person to whom I allude, and other persons besides, believe that you were persuaded to part with the child Mr. Ferrier gave you, and to substitute some other in its place. I should like to show them that it was no such thing. Now can we make sure of doing so?"

"Yes, sir, I hope so. We can, if any of the people are living whom I used to see at that time. The doctor, in particular, declared to me that it never could have lived long. It was found exposed (as I understood) on a cold night. It had certainly been carried through the night air, without being sufficiently wrapped up. And the doctor said, besides, that it was a delicate child, that it had had no chance from its birth. But Mr. Ferrier took so to the child, he never could bear to hear that said, and so I didn't tell it him quite so plainly as perhaps I ought to have done."

"Well, Madame Durange, is it true that, while the child was still living with you, a lady, living in Fulham, expressed great interest in it, and frequently inquired about it?"

"Yes, sir, that is quite true. The lady was a Mrs. Campion. The name was brought to my mind this very morning." Here, for the first time during the interview, Madame's straightforward manner forsook her, and she hesitated and stammered a little. She was, of course, thinking of her promise made to Mr. Campion on the steamer, to observe strict silence as to her having met with him; a promise which she had been on the point of overlooking. But neither Mr. nor Mrs. Ballow understood anything more than that the advertisement which had brought her to England had recalled, one after another, the several names and facts connected with the Hammersmith affair. So she was suffered, without any cross-questioning at all, to proceed in her own way.

"The lady's name," she said, "was Campion." And once again Madame considered whether the promise that morning exacted from her might not have some unsuspected bearing upon the other matter. But she again went on.

"Mrs. Campion sent her manservant in the first instance, and called more than once herself. She asked me if I were sure the poor child would be always well taken care of. I said I greatly feared it would not need caring for long. I thought when I said that, she looked very unhappy indeed. I found out she had never had any children of her own. And I confess I began to wonder at the interest she took in it. She would scarcely believe me when I assured her that all which care and money could do was being done for the baby. And she quite forced me

to take some money from her. What she thought, when she heard that the child had died, I never knew ; for I was suddenly sent for to join my brother in Australia. And as I was then a young widow, and my own child lately dead, I was very eager to go. I don't know, sir, that I can possibly tell you any more ; if I can, I gladly will."

There did not, indeed, appear much more to be told. Mr. Ballow begged of Madame Durange to take up her abode with them until the Monday ; and on that day they would both go up together to town, and establish by personal testimony the actual death of the baby at present falsely identified with Eva.

Captain Ferrier might be invited to meet and accompany them, if he would.

This plan was duly carried out on Monday, the 28th of July. The doctor, Mr. Osprey, was alive still, and to be found in Hammersmith still. He was one who had sought and found his chief professional fame in studying the *physique* of infants. He well recollected his being called in to the foundling *protégée* of Mr. Ferrier. And he was prepared to assert from undoubted memory, and, moreover, to support it by written memoranda made at the time, and still in existence, that, without an actual miracle, the life in that unfortunate infant could not have possibly been prolonged above the space of a very few months.

A physician, who stood at nearly the pinnacle of his profession, had recorded his experience that, in no instance physically corresponding with the above, had he ever witnessed a prolonged life. It was in the order of nature impossible.

Respectable persons were found, who had frequently seen the baby in Mrs. Markley's keeping, in the period during which she had nursed it. And they were satisfied that no change of children had been or could have been effected. The landlady of that inn to which Mr. Ferrier had in the first instance taken the baby, had noticed a particular mark on its arm, and had noticed it again when she saw the child laid out for its early and lasting rest. (It was a kind of mark which, if the child could have lived, would probably have worn away in a year or two.)

All these testimonies were obtained and formally noted, with a care too easily imagined by the reader to need any description by the writer. Richard would possibly have hurried down into Wales himself, to announce the happy discovery to Eva ; but while these affairs were still transacting, he was summoned to the bedside of his most intimate friend, a gentleman who, like himself, had passed through the Crimean war, but who was now alarmingly ill at his home in the north of Scotland. Richard knew he left a zealous and efficient substitute in the person of Mr. Ballow. That gentleman could not go to Llynbwllyn in person. But he prepared to write the matter out for Eva, and to urge her, as quietly as might be, to take a long farewell of Mrs. Roberts and the Dowlases, and come back to Minchley and happiness at once. Richard

would probably join them on any favourable turn in the illness of his friend.

Mr. Ballow wrote this letter in London, on Wednesday, the 30th of July, and himself went back to Minchley the very same evening.

The letter was in Eva's hands in the early afternoon of Thursday, the latest day of July. And to Eva and to Llynbwllyn it is high time that we should ourselves return.

SUPERSTITION.

It is one of the anomalies of an age of materialism and scientific research, that superstition and a love of the supernatural should have received an extensive and apparently firm development. Whilst scepticism is striving to overturn the matured convictions of centuries, and to reduce the dogmas of faith and the narratives of religion to arithmetical calculations and logical reasonings, it seems somewhat a paradox that a small class of the community should have seized upon the present as a favourable opportunity for a display of wonderful feats, which they boldly and daringly ascribe to causes other than those of nature's laws.

But the facts which every day present themselves before our eyes, and the inferences which we are bidden to draw from them, give unmistakable indications of the living existence of that human curiosity, which, not content with ordinary events and every-day topics, seeks to penetrate the deeper mysteries of nature, and so found new theories of power upon evidence which but attests the daring skill of the few and the blind credulity of the many. That which bears the external appearance of a miracle, a wonder, a temporary or exceptional violation of the laws which guide the universe, kindles a yearning for research, and an eager craving for explanation; and while it gives rise to all sorts of perplexing doubts and confused fancies, affords ample scope for jugglery and imposture.

The ancient legends of sorcery and witchcraft have passed away, and sober reason refuses to be led astray by claims which will not bear the test of scientific investigation. Yet human curiosity lives on for ever, and it is not long since in a village in Essex an old man, who led a secluded life and held aloof from converse and intercourse with his neighbours, was seized by the superstitious villagers among whom he lived, and actually put to death, on the ground that he had dealings with the powers of darkness. This startling fact points significantly to the feeling which still survives in the land, and serves as a reproach to the age in which we live.

The Rosierucians are probably extinct; the alchemist no longer looks into the caldron for the gold which was the object of so many wasted lives; the fate of Bombastes Paracelsus is not likely to overtake any modern aspirant for the precious elixir of life: but a more fatal and pernicious form of mystic study has supervened. The fortune-tellers have undoubtedly lost their power and popularity; and the money bestowed by the visitors to the Epsom Downs upon the members of the gipsy tribes emanates rather from charity and pity; the happy father of a large family smiles benignantly at the woman who assures him that his love has been misplaced; and that he is fated to live and die a bachelor; and the

bereaved widower sighs sadly as he is told that his lovely lady is anxiously awaiting his return. This phase of superstition has passed away—at least among the educated classes; but a more dangerous has succeeded. The stars no longer offer mysterious omens to the learned; the magic crystal of Dr. Dee is mentioned only to provoke a smile; the conjunction of Mars and Saturn may safely be disregarded in our horoscopes. But the mysteries of mesmerism and electro-biology have supplanted these old-fashioned theories about the aspect of the heavens and the lines upon the hands. And the latest development of the new rules of faith has appeared in the shape of animal magnetism and spirit-rapping.

The conjurors and magicians in most cases ascribe their feats to legerdemain, or superior craft; and yet in the midst of all our incredulity, and in glaring contrast to the sceptical spirit of the age, there exists an extraordinary readiness to listen to the words of those who, possessed of more imaginative minds, or gifted with more versatile talents, bid us look in awe and wonderment at the demonstrations of supernatural agency, and tremble at the workings of unseen, mysterious powers.

The secrets of the unknown world are now communicated by means of mysterious raps upon walls, doors, and tables, and we are seriously asked to believe that this communication between the two worlds is maintained by means of disembodied spirits who flit fearfully about the legs of tables, struggle ineffectually to master the science of orthography, and feebly grasp at mortals with gleaming but tender hands. An appeal such as this would seem to have no claim upon our senses—to need no refutation or denial—to contain within itself the proofs of its absurdity. But a result far different has occurred. Not only have these mysterious arts been practised in private houses, but public buildings have been filled with people eager to pay their money, and prepared to be confounded, perplexed, and sometimes convinced, by the demonstrations of the mediums. About a year ago advertisements appeared in the daily papers, stating the price of these *séances*. Books have been written on the subject, in which the honour of the writers is pledged for the truth of the statements put forth, and for the sincerity of the convictions arising from the witnessed facts. And this is an age of scepticism and unbelief!

The wonder of the reception of such doctrines exceeds that of their existence: it can be explained only by the innate yearning of the human mind after the supernatural, and the willingness of a certain class to believe anything rather than have the trouble of looking below the surface. The kindred sympathy of souls, of which the poets sing merely as a sentimental image, is now a real and living fact! Mysterious connections exist between distant people and things. Considerations of space and time are indeed annihilated. And the mind of man is no longer a treasury of secret thoughts and feelings, but a book, which the electrobiologist opens and reads at will. Some time ago a figure called the

Anthropoglossos was exhibited at Saint James's Hall in London. People flocked together to listen to the musical articulation of the automaton, many sincerely admiring the ingenuity* of the scientific invention, many expressing utter disbelief in its genuineness, and alluding significantly to the invisible lady and the automaton chess-player. But no one for an instant ventured to ascribe the effects to supernatural agency. The idea of such a pretension would have been instantly scouted.

Why, then, should the demonstrations of these spirit mediums be more favourably viewed? What is there in their *séances* that can claim so lenient a criticism? Let us picture a scene. A company is assembled; all lights are extinguished; the incantation commences; the spirits are requested to signify their presence in the room by raps upon the table. Should any individual, more sceptical, more daring than the rest, venture to give forcible expression to his doubts, and endeavour to fathom the mysteries of the dark room, the medium conveniently discovers that the spirits are troubled at the presence of the unbeliever. The obnoxious member of the circle is requested to withdraw, and then the performance continues. It may be presumed that a certain amount of credulity is an indispensable qualification in a candidate for conversion to the inscrutable faith of spirit-worship. When, however, the medium has insured the absence of the too critical inquirer, questions are put to the spirits, and after a great deal of trouble, which the invisible agents might to advantage curtail, answers more or less clever are given, and feats more or less awkward performed. Either the host floats through the air from one side of the room to the other, or the various ornaments become suddenly endued with animal activity, and hasten to seize the opportunity of changing their positions. A favourite diversion of most of the spirits seems to be that of pulling the window-blinds up and down. This appears a somewhat slow sort of amusement, but serves to gratify the wishes of the spectators, and awakens within them the most irrepressible feelings of curiosity. Musical instruments also disport themselves in the most arbitrary way, usually emitting some low, wailing, discordant strains. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to believe that the difficulties under which the performance takes place should render the discordance a necessity. But, nevertheless, the impression left upon the minds of the frequenters of these impenetrable mysteries is frequently attended with the most lamentable results; and the miracles of Mr. Home and the cabinet manipulations of the Davenports, in spite of the ridicule with which the more critical and practical men of the age greet them, have made many converts, and raised speculative doubts in the minds of those even whose sterner reason will not allow of their conversion. It is a question somewhat difficult of solution whence this new superstition has arisen; whether it is the mere reaction of the unbelieving and practical turn of thought prevalent at the present day, or whether it has also received an impetus

from the writings of our novelists and philosophers. The "Strange Story," by Lord Lytton, must have encouraged in some measure the restless curiosity of man as to the future, and his eager longing to penetrate beyond the limits of legitimate science and grasp the hidden link which connects the natural with the supernatural. The mysterious power exercised by Margrave, the magical attraction of the wand, the persevering search after the elixir of life, work upon the imagination and fill the mind with morbid aspirations to visionary ends. Whether the whole work be an allegory, or a scheme of metaphysical study imperfectly elaborated, the impression upon the mind of the reader must in many cases be pernicious. He sees a picture of supernatural agencies, dimly imaged and doubtfully explained. Following the train of thought which seems to have animated the writer, he begins to entertain grave and serious doubts upon the very points which perhaps the book was originally intended to clear up and explain. In a warm and impressionable mind enthusiasm for a mysterious study aids the work of the story, and the mischief becomes ineradicable. Strong intellects doubtless ridicule the whole thing, and treat it as a carefully veiled burlesque; but many accept the implied sentiment, and fall easily into the groove of superstitious thought which it prompts. The closing scene certainly suggests a somewhat amusing reflection. The magic circle has been formed, sights wonderful and supernatural have been seen, the incantation progresses apparently with some success, the evil eye is shooting out its terrible glances,—when suddenly the rolling wave of wind and flame sweeps over the scene, the infuriated bull, flying from the fiery forest, dashes over the mystic barrier, and thrusts his hoof into the magic cauldron. In an instant everything is changed. The whole vision fades away; there remains only Margrave, the infirm, wizened old man, shorn of his power, baffled in his schemes. How did the author mean us to interpret this climax of his work? Is this the physical power of nature dashing to pieces with its touch the clumsy fabrics of the magicians? In any case the supernatural fades away, and the natural alone remains, and the story of the book ends.

But the story of man's superstition by no means ends with the *séance* which he has attended. It follows him into life; it fills his mind, distracts his thoughts, confounds his intellect, and too often destroys his reason. Plain, matter-of-fact, practical men of the world can hardly credit such things as these. They smile incredulously, and ask if any one can really be deluded by the shallow tricks of these mediums. An answer in the affirmative provokes a shrug of the shoulders and a look of wondering pity,—of wonder at human folly, of pity at its deplorable issue. Unfortunately, we are not all strong-minded, common-sense men, and the innate yearning after the marvellous subdues the dictates of sense and reason.

Should a man proclaim that he possesses a magic potion, capable of prolonging the allotted years of life to their double, a smile of derision

follows. But an adventurous charlatan may openly announce the possession of a familiar, and his *levées* are thronged with anxious crowds, and the manifestations of the *séance* are hailed with eager delight. Can it be that man—confounded at the extraordinary discoveries of scientific philosophers, and dazzled by the lightning flash of electricity, the mighty power of steam—has for a time abdicated his functions, and ceased to weigh the merits of the new claims upon his belief? Has his fear of being deemed incredulous made him the easy dupe of the impostor? Has the negation of incredulity degenerated into degrading superstition? The scientific doubts, the severe criticisms of the divine revelation, the rapid growth of rationalism and infidelity, would seem to preclude such an explanation. But while one of the dignitaries of the Church openly asperses the authenticity of the Scriptures, and applies the test of logic and science to their contents, a charlatan deludes us with his pretended feats of supernatural power, and actually gains converts to the most senseless, unreasonable, and illogical faith that the world has ever witnessed. Subtle folly! strange infatuation! The blind credulity of man must indeed be worked to a high pitch before such a faith as this can be deceived. The apparently inexplicable wonders of the *séance* bewilder the intellect, which in its helpless impotence accepts the dictum of the impostor as its guide; the deeply-seated longing to read the secrets of futurity asserts its power; and before it reason, logic, scepticism, are vain and useless.

The superstition which develops itself in a belief in apparitions, omens, warnings, dreams, is, by the side of this latter fanaticism, harmless and inoffensive. The popular idea of a ghost is so vague and indefinite, and the evidence is so manifestly extraordinary and so comparatively valueless and obscure, that little injury results from the discussion of such phenomena. There is probably no case on record of a ghost having been seen simultaneously by two people; and an apparition generally resolves itself into an optical illusion or a severe attack of indigestion. Presentiments are but conclusions deduced from certain bases by irregular, but still somewhat logical, processes of reasoning. And the small number of dreams that ever contain warnings, or receive fulfilment, bid us rather to contemplate in surprise the millions that have no bearing whatever upon subsequent events.

But it is not with this form of superstition that the battle is to be waged. It is with the blind eagerness of man to be led away by supernatural manifestations, and his tendency to receive the pretended revelations of the adventurous impostors who are beguiling mankind. Sceptical doubts and logical theories are all lost sight of in the excitement produced by the invocation of spirits, and the mind is gradually prepared for the reception of the most absurd statements, and for belief in the most monstrous and incredible facts. The cloud of dark ignorance rests heavily upon the age, and a determined and strenuous effort is required to remove

this great reproach to our civilization. It may perhaps be forgotten that there is still in existence an Act of Parliament which forbids all pretensions to "enchantment or conjuration," under penalty of imprisonment. But even apart from this contingency, let the feats of the mediums, when their claims become too serious to pass by unheeded, be subjected to a scientific examination; let there be no absurd conditions which shall preclude the possibility of the imposture being exposed. Let but a fair test be applied, and the whole edifice of fraud and trickery will crumble away before the attacks of science, and leave to the professors of the art nothing but the name of charlatans and rogues.

MARK SHATTOCK.

HENNEBON.

Hennebon is fair and lovely,
 Summer dwells within its vale;
 There nor comes the southern tempest,
 Nor the biting northern gale;
 But the town was full of sorrow
 When we lay there, close beset
 By the prowling dogs of Charles,—
 Bring me wine, *petite soubrette*!

Dogs of foemen!—craven Spaniards—
 Scourings of enslavèd lands—
 Genoese, athirst for plunder,
 Link'd to Charles's cut-throat bands—
 Fighters not with honest weapons,
 But with cunning snares and lies;
 Trustful not in open combat,
 Great in secret villanies.

For they bribed the traitor bishop,
 Guy de Leon—pious priest!
 He, to gain our ancient nobles,
 Bade them to a mighty feast;
 And with wily tongue he flatter'd—
 Promised pardon, riches, grace,
 Would they but forget their honour,
 And the honour of their race!

Blessings on thee, girl!—our countess
 Was not one to fret or pine—
 She whose arm could curb a war-horse
 And direct a battle-line!
 Gallant lady!—lion-hearted—
 Worthy spouse of worthy knight—
 He who now lay bound in Paris,
 Hearing faintly of the fight.

But with traitors at its council,
 Who can tell a city's fate?
 Fiercer foes than those in trenches
 Are the foes within its gate;
 And our brave and noble lady
 Well might bend a suppliant knee,
 To implore that Mary Mother
 Should avert their villany.

Then she rose, and proudly turning
 (There was silence of the grave),
 Glanced upon the lords assembled
 Close within the crowded nave :
 " So may Mary Mother help us,"
 Thus outspoke the royal dame,
 " To uphold the house of Montfort,
 And the glory of its name ! "

" Not for me, but for my husband,
 Basely held in chains afar,
 Thus I pray you and beseech you,
 Aid me in a holy war !
 You have wives and you have children—
 As you love them, and would gain
 Bliss for them that knows no ending—
 Aid me 'gainst this lord of Spain ! "

But there came a sudden darkness
 All around us as she spake ;
 Each man look'd upon his neighbour
 In the silence none dared break :
 Face to face with unknown danger,
 Hush'd and fearful stood we there,
 And we saw our noble lady
 Humbly bow her head in prayer.

Then again she look'd upon us,
 With a smile so glad and free,
 All our hearts went madly leaping
 To embrace her augury ;
 " See, my lords, the doom impending
 On our foes ! whate'er betide,
 Victory attends our banners,
 Heaven itself is on our side ! "

Lo ! the words were scarcely spoken,
 When a brilliant shaft of light
 Fell athwart her silver armour ;
 Oh ! it was a wondrous sight :
 And a murmur ran among us,
 But none ventured to applaud ;
 For we knew this awful token
 Was the messenger of God :

Then at nightfall out we sallied ;
 Men of Auray, men of Vannes,
 Stout Sir Yves, with his archers,
 And the lord of Landreman ;
 And we fired the nest of traitors
 Till the dark grew bright as day,—
 While the lion-hearted countess
 Sought the thickest of the fray.

Oh ! to see the crimson splendour
 Shooting up the starry vault !
 'Twas no Gascon, no, nor Spaniard,
 Who led on the fierce assault.
 Hurried shrieks and imprecations—
 Hurried marchings through the night—
 Told how well the spouse de Montfort
 Led her Bretons into fight.

Wasps ! they throng'd and thicken'd round us,
 Swarm'd from out their flaming nest ;
 Swarm'd and thicken'd round and round us ;
 Need I tell you, girl, the rest ?
 Ay, you laugh, you little serpent ;
 Better you should weep instead,
 For, with pressure of their numbers,
 We were beaten back and fled.

Northward fled ; but willing succour
 Flock'd unto our standard there,
 From the dark woods of Pontivy,
 From the valley of Quimper :
 And to Hennebon returning,
 Where the rushing Blavet brawls,
 Rested not until our lady
 Stood within her castle walls.

Day by day we watch'd, expecting
 Sunlit sails of English ships ;
 Day by day Sir Guy de Leon
 Dropp'd slow poison from his lips ;
 Till impatient knights and nobles
 'Gan to murmur and to fret :
 God protect our gallant countess,
 Sorely on all sides beset !

Day by day she walk'd among us,
Speaking out right cheerfully,
Though we saw the pending sorrow
Dull the lustre of her eye :
For she knew the traitor-bishop
By his art was gaining ground,
Till within the hapless city
Scarce one loyal heart was found.

Came they to her, then, demanding
That, to give the people bread,
And to save the town from pillage
(So the wily bishop said),
She should make a truce with Charles,
Throw herself on Philippe's grace,
And in person plead the merits
Of her prison'd husband's case.

Pale she grew, yet firm in pallor,—
As a tree, when summer's past,
Still with bare and trembling branches
Will outbrave the biting blast :
And she look'd upon her nobles
With a glance of proud despair,
Till their hearts were touch'd to pity
At the grief of one so fair.

"This I crave, and this boon only,
That for three days more ye wait;
Then, unless Heaven interposes,
I surrender to my fate."
Low she spake, and sadly going,
Sought a turret lone and high,
Where the long-expected succour
First of all she might descry.

Hour by hour next day she waited,
With her boy upon her knee;
But no hull of English vessel
Marr'd the azure of the sea.
From the dawn until the even
Stay'd she on the windy height,
Straining eyes to catch a token
In that world of blinding light.

Morn beheld her at her station,
 With a cheek of paler hue;
 Still no far-off speck of whiteness
 Touch'd the weary waste of blue:
 Sadly look'd she—very sadly
 On the fair head of her son,
 While the great bell, loud and brazen,
 Toll'd the hours out one by one.

So you weep, you little mimic!
 With your gems and lady's gear;
 Think you our heroic countess
 Worth a sympathetic tear?
 Hush! I scarce can deem her woman,
 When I hear you also claim
 To be woman-like as she was:
 Such the virtue of a name!

Sorely tired, nigh broken-hearted,
 Turn'd she from the blinding glare,
 For her weary eyes were shrouded
 By the weight of her despair;
 And once more came down the gloaming,
 Burning in the splendid west;
 But for her and for her sorrows
 Mellow evening brought no rest.

“Mother, mother! Yonder, yonder!
 What are those that now I see?
 Ships! the happy ships of England,
 Harbingers of joy to thee!”
 Lo! she rose, and faintly gazing,
 Saw the fleet of sunlit sails
 Bearing inward to the river,
 Wafted by propitious gales!

Need I tell you, girl, the story?
 How Sir Walter and his peers
 Drove our foes, like sheep, before them,
 And abash'd the city's fears;
 While on high our grateful lady,
 Weeping, knelt upon the stone,
 And returned her thanks to Heaven
 For its mercies to her shown.

Then with step full proud and stately
Went she to receive the lords
Who had done this gallant service
With their good and loyal swords:
To each knight her hand extending
(Full of joy, she could not speak),
As a sign of queenly welcome,
Kiss'd him once on either cheek!

O that night of joy and laughter!
Hennebon was wreathed in smiles,
Giving welcome to the warriors
From the distant northern isles;
And they came unto a banquet,
And in draughts of purple wine
Pledged the royal house of Montfort,
God preserve its noble line!

WILLIAM BLACK.

MUSIC.

MUSIC, we may be sure, has existed in all ages and countries, because it originates from the constitution of human nature. Some nations, however—for instance, the Egyptians,—having more successfully than others cultivated the art, have received the credit of its discovery, where the true inventor is good Mother Nature. Among the Egyptians, no doubt, it cannot be denied that the art flourished in considerable perfection. This was mainly due to their construction of instruments for the accompaniment of song, and is probably what historians refer to when they speak of this wonderful people as the inventors of music. For these instruments it is said they were indebted to the Nile, after an inundation of which would be left behind a quantity of reeds, through which the wind whistling suggested the idea of something like a flute. A similar origin is assigned to the harp. Dead tortoises, when cast on the banks by the ebbing flood, would have the flesh dried and wasted by the sun, and nothing would remain but shell, nerves, and cartilages. Mercury, it is said, in his rural rambles struck his foot against one of these, and found it delightfully sonorous. It at once occurred to him to construct a lyre in the shape of a tortoise. This account is akin to the beginning assigned to some of the other arts—for instance, architecture from birds building their nests, and textile manufactures from the spider spinning his web.

The flourishing condition of music in Egypt sufficiently accounts for its transmission into other parts of the world, as Egypt was a centre of diffusion for all the then known arts of life. The treasures of Egyptian civilization emptied themselves into two channels, the Hebrews and Greeks, which conveyed them far and wide over the earth. Moses, we are told in Scripture, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and by implication, therefore, in music. We find afterwards what an important position music occupied in the religious services of the Jews, more especially their sepulchral rites. The grandeur of Solomon's Dedication was enhanced by the large and splendid choirs which he brought into requisition, while from the technical directions given it is evident that the greater portion of the devotional and prophetic portions of the Old Testament were designed for musical accompaniments. Among the Greeks, likewise, the art, fostered with the utmost care, was estimated by philosophers and statesmen as one of the foremost causes in advancing popular education. A similar feeling, in a less degree, passed over into Italy and actuated the Etruscans and Romans, from whom it has been bequeathed to the inhabitants of modern Europe.

Before music became a prominent feature in European civilization it was buried, in common with the rest of the arts, under the ruins of the

old Roman Empire. It was, however, disintombed somewhat in advance of the other arts, as we observe it during the Middle Ages displaying an exceptional vitality. For this we are, in a great measure, indebted to the Church, the religious order of which, finding in music a very agreeable occupation, extended towards it much of their leisure time. Nor was this attention unproductive, as from the monasteries issued two very important discoveries in music, namely, counterpoint and the time-table. The first was made A.D. 1022, by Guido, a monk of Arezzo, in Tuscany; and the second by John De Muris, supposed by some to have been an Englishman. The time-table, however, Muris himself seems prepared to award to one Franco, who flourished about half a century after Guido. These discoveries, combined with instrumental improvements, more especially the organ, imparted to the science a powerful impulse. Though it thus owed its earliest if not greatest development to ecclesiastical cultivation, music, in process of time partly disengaging itself from the Church, took up its abode in the world. Indeed, the Church herself, to some extent, contributed to this by the performance of what were called "Mysteries," or "Miracle Plays." These go back to a very early date, and were evidently at first designed by the clergy as a counteracting cause to the demoralizing dramas of paganism. It was hoped that these "mysteries," which were poetic versions of subjects taken from Scripture, and introduced with all the pomp of scenic decoration and dress, would divert the tastes of the Christians from heathen theatres. How far this had the desired effect we have no very definite ground for judging, though in after ages, when about the time of St. Philip Neri this species of sacred play was revived, we find it producing rather an opposite result. This did not follow quite at first until the *oratorio* and the *masque*, both of them offshoots from the "mysteries," became established in public favour. It was the *masque* especially which brought music on the stage, and then introduced it into close contact with every-day life. This was the harbinger of music's after triumphs, when, becoming undoubtedly linked with all our public and private amusements, it interpenetrated our whole social and domestic enjoyment. To this the invention of printing was a great assistance, as it brought a knowledge of the principles of music within the reach of the people at large. The aristocracy of different countries encouraged the art, and this, with the patronage of royalty, more particularly in England and France, served to render music a test of liberal education. Teachers now appeared who, having mastered music scientifically, were enabled to turn out well-informed pupils, many of whom afterwards became celebrated public singers. Provision was made for a continued supply of superior performers by the establishment of academies, chiefly in the leading towns of Italy. All this elevated the standard of musical taste and criticism, since the consciousness that their works could be executed by properly educated musicians naturally stimulated the genius of composers.

The effects of this vibrated throughout almost every country in Europe. In England, from the sixteenth century onwards, Music exerted her refining and harmonizing power over society. It became an essential element in all public amusements, as well as an important auxiliary to the devotional exercises of divine worship. With us, as elsewhere, the Church took a leading part, and the superiority in ecclesiastical was the precursor to the successful cultivation of secular music. We have a vivid illustration of this during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. Side by side with a splendid elaboration of the cathedral method, we have music gaining vitality and strength in those semi-dramatic performances—the *masques*—which, on a scale of so much grandeur, and often at an enormous outlay, were produced by the king and nobility, and occasionally by the Lord Mayor of London and the inns of court. These *masques* attracted the notice of poets, and led to that alliance between them and musicians which laid the foundation of the lyric drama. Some of Ben Jonson's most exquisite works—possibly those that will live longest—were written for these entertainments. While, however, everything at this period looked so promising, an event occurred which well-nigh wrecked the fortunes of music in England—the outbreak of that civil war which cost the unfortunate Charles his throne and life. The then dominant party in the State, in their hostility to dramatic amusements, passed some very stringent Acts of Parliament for their suppression. Actors, musicians, and strolling players were ordered at once to quit the kingdom. This was carrying out the spirit of a book published in the reign of Charles I.—Prynne's celebrated "*Histrio-Mastix*" (actor's scourge). This very fierce and intemperate attack on the stage entailed on its unfortunate author imprisonment and fine, together with the loss of his ears. One circumstance—Cromwell's passionate fondness for the art—probably preserved music in our country, at this period, from utter ruin. To this, in all likelihood, may be ascribed the revival brought about by Sir William Davenant, who, shortly before the Restoration, produced at a sort of private theatre, in Rutland House, Charterhouse Square, London, "*The Siege of Rhodes*"—a mixed entertainment of music and acting, which though similar in outline, seems to have been an improvement on the *masques*.

The progress amongst us of music was accelerated by improvements in our metropolitan theatres, as regards scenic decoration, histrionic apparel, and the architectural beauty of the buildings themselves. While all this was so favourable for the cultivation of the opera, which was further advanced by Handel's continued residence in London, a quantity of brilliant music also was being composed suitable for the chamber and concert hall. One of the foremost names in this department is that of Henry Purcell, who achieved and deserves the reputation of one of the most distinguished musicians that England has produced. His anthems, for sublimity and expression, are some of the finest extant, and in his

adaptation of music to the peculiarities of the English language he eclipses his formidable rival, the author of the "Messiah." Purcell's instrumental music is sparkling and delicious. His works for the violin are fit to take their place beside the most finished pieces of the famous Corelli. Another musician, before Purcell's time, Matthew Locke, is entitled to honourable mention. His well-known music for "Macbeth," both in its melody and choral parts, has satisfied the requirements of the most exacting criticism. It was much in advance of its day, and is an emanation of pure genius. Subordinate to these might be mentioned many who at this time contributed their share to the development of the art, their chief service being the composition of glees, madrigals, and catches. In this manner was generated a taste, so congenial to the English people, of part-singing. This is an invaluable accomplishment, not only because it renders indispensable in singers a knowledge of vocal music, but affords to family life a fund of agreeable and healthful recreation.

The cultivation of chamber music could not of course occupy the same prominent position in public attention as that of the musical drama. In England the progress in music just mentioned made all ripe for the introduction of the Italian opera. This is due to Handel, who came to London about the year 1710, and for several years was manager of the Opera House, and composed some three dozen pieces for it. But before his arrival, and after it, we had our own English opera, with which are associated the names of Purcell and Dr. Arne. Purcell may be said to be the father of English melody; and Arne, his successor, with much originality and skill worked up existing materials. Amid, however, all this talent for composition, and the presence successively in London of most of the great vocalists of Europe, there was, unhappily, much to retard among us the progress of the art. The contact of the Italian and English opera produced much false ornamentation in music; the ancient liking for *masques* not having disappeared, managers were tempted to try and render the musical drama popular by the addition of "inexplicable dumb show and noise." For instance, the famous singer Nicoline had to fight with a lion, which fierce animal was personated by one of the scene-shifters. In another opera, at a particular scene, a flock of sparrows was let loose on the stage. All this might be very amusing to those who came to use their eyes rather than their ears, but it was incongruous and very injurious to the best interests of music. Such practices were not long in provoking severe animadversions. Addison, in the *Spectator*, turned the whole opera into ridicule, and was ably supported by the cleverest wits of the day. Swift's satire on Handel everybody has heard of; all this was bad enough, but worse remains behind. Handel's superlative powers raised up competitors, very second-rate ones indeed. This gave rise to the production of the opera at other theatres, each of which enjoyed its own set of patrons. The most vehement partisans were among the aristocracy, who, not excepting even the fair sex, conducted themselves in

what may be fitly called the affray, with very unbecoming zeal. The theatres were often the battle-ground for contending factions. This for the time being brought a blight on music. However, since good so often comes out of evil, one salutary consequence ensued. Handel, stung with vexation at the cabals of the nobility and the failure of his theatrical speculations, resolved to turn his attention towards ecclesiastical music. For this he had at an early age evinced peculiar aptitude, which though now advanced in life, remained, as the result proved, unimpaired. From the depths of an inventive genius which no amount of composition seemed capable of exhausting, issued those splendid, glorious oratorios, which spread around his memory imperishable renown, and which, with the subsequent labours of Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, and Mendelssohn, have elevated music to its present perfection.

Some are of opinion that music has already attained its highest culture. An apology for this view exists in the diminution of power as regards composition in the present compared with preceding centuries. No modern work, it appears to us, is entitled to dispute the palm with the productions of the great composers of the eighteenth century. The *forte* of the present generation probably lies in making what has been already accomplished subsidiary to the creation of a taste for classical music, and to a diffusion among the people generally of a knowledge of its principles. A proper prominence is now assigned to music even in popular education, and we find the art cordially and extensively cultivated. Music becomes a powerful counteracting cause to that wear and tear of life incident to the rapid growth of civilization. It institutes an agreeable occupation during the leisure from business, while the practice of singing affords a salutary corrective to the deterioration of the respiratory organs from sedentary employments. It likewise exercises a purifying and softening influence over society, and is a strong bond of fellowship to families when other causes would bring disunion. In the more hallowed department of religion music discharges an important office, and if even for no other reason is entitled to the affection and admiration of mankind. Here, indeed, music yields obvious indications of celestial growth. The most refulgent crown, however, she has ever worn in this world is, we may be sure, but a faint image of her majestic honours in a purer and nobler sphere. Earthly strains are but echoes from heaven's everlasting harmonies.

THE LADY'S MILE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ONLY A CLOD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BY THE SEA.

PSYCHE and the Zephyrs waited the last touches of the master's hand ; but William Crawford painted no more. The eminent oculist would not give him any decided opinion as to the ultimate restoration of his sight.

"We must wait," he said ; "you must give me time."

The painter obeyed his medical adviser implicitly ; and after pursuing a certain course of treatment for a certain time, he went with his servant Dimond to a little sea-coast village in Dorsetshire,—still in accordance with the oculist's advice. Change of air—change to a better and purer air than the atmosphere of Kensington—could do no harm, said the oculist, and might possibly effect some good.

William Crawford begged the oculist to select for him the loneliest and quietest spot he knew of ; and to that spot he went, travelling by a night train, with a green shade over his poor useless eyes, and the factotum who had served him since the beginning of his prosperity for his sole companion and attendant.

As yet he had told his dismal secret to no one but the oculist and the man-servant. Friends and acquaintances called at the Fountains, and were told that Mr. Crawford was ill. Was it anything serious ? Oh no—nothing serious ; he had overworked himself,—that was all. The painter could not bring himself to reveal his sorrow even to his best friend ; he could not bring himself to confess that his career had come to an end—that a living death had fallen upon him in the zenith of his fame. All through the long, dark, empty days—the perpetual night of his existence—he brooded upon his trouble : never any more to behold the beauty of the universe, never again to be the mortal creator of immortal loveliness. There are no words which can describe his despair when he thought that his career had ended, that his hand would never again wield a brush, his eyes never more be dazzled by the splendour of his own colour.

He prayed night and day ; but he could not bring himself yet to repeat the inspired words which had formed his nightly and daily supplication before the hour of his calamity. He could not say, "Thy will be done." He cried again and again, "O Lord, restore my sight—restore my sight !"

He thought of other men on whom the same calamity had fallen ; but on those men it had fallen so lightly. Milton's grandest thoughts

found their expression after the outer universe had become a blank to him.. Beethoven achieved that which was almost a triumph over the impossible—when his genius survived the loss of his hearing; but oh, what anguish the musician must have endured when his fingers wove those divine harmonies which he was never to hear! For the sightless painter what hope remained? Henceforward there could be no light upon William Crawford's pathway but the pale radiance of past glories.

While his misfortune was yet new to him the painter gave way to utter despair: he complained to no one—he demanded no mortal pity,—but hour after hour, day after day, he sat in the same attitude—dead in life. He knew that he had many friends who would have been inexpressibly glad to give him comfort in these bitter days—friends who would have done their best to cheer his desolation with pleasant talk, grave reading, music, poetry, the stirring news of the outer world, the airy gossip of coteries. He could not bring himself to accept such consolation yet. The very thought of friendly companionship made him shudder.

"I shall never paint any more," he cried; "I shall never paint any more. The young men would talk and think of me as they talk and think of the dead. They would be kind, and pity me; but I don't want their pity. I want to show them that I have not emptied my sack, and that there is progress for me yet."

One day the painter groped his way to the easel on which the *Psyche* still stood, shrouded with dismal drapery. He plucked the veil from his divinity, and passed his tremulous hands over the canvas. They were hands as yet unused to groping in the dark, and he had none of the subtle delicacy of the blind man's touch; but when he came to patches of solid colour here and there, he fancied he recognized familiar portions of his work.

"My *Psyche's* hair," he murmured; "I can feel the undulating touches of the brush; and here are her shoulders, the rounded pearly shoulders! Yes, yes, I remember; there was a thought too much of the palette knife hereabouts."

He laid his face against the canvas presently, and some of the bitterest tears that ever fell from manly eyes dropped slowly on the picture which he could not see.

He was very glad to leave his own house and to escape from the inquiries of anxious friends and acquaintances. He had a nervous dread of any revelation of his calamity.

"Would *she* be sorry for me?" he thought; for even in this dark hour of his life his fancy took a forbidden flight now and then, and hovered about the lady of the Hermitage. "Would she be sorry? No; she would only be interested in me as a new kind of lion. She would come and beseech me to show myself at her parties. She would pet me, and exhibit me to her friends as the blind painter—the last new thing in

drawing-room celebrities. No, I will not accept her pity; I will not sink so low as that. I will go and hide myself in some quiet corner, and let the world believe that I am dead, if it will."

Not even to his daughter had William Crawford confided his sorrow. She was far away from him—at Pevenshall—surrounded by gaieties and splendours; and what need had he to darken her young life with the knowledge of his affliction? He dictated a letter to the factotum Dimond, in which he informed Flo that he had hurt his hand, and was for that reason unable to write himself, but that he was in excellent health, and was on the point of starting for the sea-side for a few months' rest and quiet.

The sea-coast village chosen by the oculist was one of the loneliest spots within the limits of civilization. There was no fear of any observant stranger recognizing William Crawford in the melancholy-looking gentleman who walked listlessly to and fro on the sands, leaning on his servant's arm, and never looking to the right or left. The little hamlet consisted of a cluster of fishermen's cottages, a general shop, and a rude village inn, where the voices of the fishermen might be heard sometimes after dark roaring the chorus of some barbarous ditty. One of those speculative individuals who are continually roaming the face of the earth, with a view to ruining themselves and other people in the building line, had discovered that the air of Callesly Bay was the balmiest that ever restored healthful roses to wan and faded cheeks, and had erected an hotel, which might have had some chance of success at Brighton or Biarritz, but which was about twenty times too large for the possible requirements of Callesly Bay. Advertisements had appealed in vain to the British public. The one sheep that leads the other sheep had not yet been tempted to jump through this special gap in the hedge; and the "Royal Phoenix Hotel and Boarding-house," with every possible attraction for noblemen and gentlemen, was a dreary failure. So much the better for William Crawford. What did he care if the waiters were listless and the cooking execrable? For the last four or five months of his life he had been in the habit of eating without knowing what he ate; and just now the most perfect achievement of culinary art would have been as dust and ashes in his mouth.

Callesly Bay suited the painter. His servant informed him that, with the exception of an invalid lady, who went out daily in a Bath-chair, and a paralytic gentleman, who took the air at his bedroom window, he was the only occupant of the great barrack-like hotel. This knowledge brought a sense of tranquillity to the painter's mind. In this quiet retreat he was safe. Here at least there were no prying eyes keeping watch at his gate; no journalists, eager for information about everybody and everything, and ready to dip their pens into their ink-bottles to spread the tidings of the painter's calamity in less than five minutes after those tidings reached their greedy ears.

Day after day, day after day, William Crawford paced the sands of the bay upon his servant's arm, and felt the soft ocean breezes on his face. There is no calamity so terrible, no affliction so bitter, that habit will not temper its anguish to the sufferer. Little by little, sweet Christian resignation began to take the place of dogged pagan despair. The grief which had fallen upon him lost the first sharpness of its sting. The past, with all its artistic pride and triumph, drifted away from the present, until it seemed to the painter that his blindness was an old familiar sorrow, and the days of his work and ambition strange and remote. Sweet fancies began to visit him as he walked slowly to and fro amid the scene of tranquil beauty which he could imagine but not see, and the subtle sense of the painter melted into the subtler sense of the poet. It is impossible for the mind of such a man to remain barren. There is in such a soul a divine light that cannot be extinguished. If the painter did not see that calm English bay in all its glory of sunrise and sunset, he saw a fairer bay, and a brighter sun going down behind enchanted waters. All the splendours of dreamland unfolded themselves before those sightless eyes. The peerless mistress of Praxiteles arose from a sunlit sea, beautiful as when Apelles beheld in her the type of his goddess. The shadows of the past grew into light in the blind painter's fancy. He forgot himself and his own loss while thinking of fairer creations than his own. The very breath of the ocean brought divine images to his mind. It was not the coast of Dorsetshire which he trod: the sands beneath his feet were the golden sands of fairy-land; the sea whose rolling waves made music in his ears was the sea that carried Æneas to Dido; the fatal ocean that bore Telemachus to Calypso; the wave that licked the white feet of Andromeda; the waste of waters on which a deadly calm came down when Agamemnon launched his Troy-bound fleet, and offended Diana visited the impious hunter with her wrath.

"If I ever live to paint again, I will do something better than Dido or Psyche," said William Crawford; for as the deep gloom of his despair vanished before the divine light of poetry, he felt a wondrous power in his fettered hands; and brooding hour after hour on the pictures which yet remained to be painted, it seemed to him as if new lights had dawned upon him in the day of his darkness—lights that would abide with him for the rest of his existence, and guide him in his future work—if God were pleased to give him back his eyesight.

He had been at Callesly Bay for more than a month, and the ocean breezes were beginning to lose their balmy summer warmth. He had grown accustomed to his affliction,—perfectly resigned, very tranquil. Day by day he took the same walks, picturing to himself the changing beauties of the scene, and sometimes even questioning the matter-of-fact Dimond as to appearances in the sea and sky. Within the last two or three weeks he had begun to take some faint interest in that outer world to which he had once belonged; and the factotum, who read a little better than the majority

of his class; beguiled the evenings by the perusal of the newspapers, and sometimes even tried his hand upon a pocket edition of Shakspeare borrowed from the landlord of that splendid failure, the "Royal Phoenix."

On one especially beautiful autumn afternoon the painter more keenly than usual felt the want of some companion a little more refined—a thought more sympathetic than Dimond the factotum.

He had paced the sands till he was tired, and had seated himself on a low rock, on which it had been his habit to sit since his first coming to that quiet shore. Sitting here, with the faithful Dimond by his side, Mr. Crawford abandoned himself to the influence of the balmy air. He knew that at such an hour and with such an atmosphere there must be unspeakable beauty in the western sky—delicious gradations of colour which he was never more to see; and he would fain have wrung some translation of that unseen beauty from the prosaic lips of the factotum.

"Is the sun low, Dimond?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; uncommon low. I never did see anything like the sunsets in these parts; they've got such a sudden way with them."

"I thought the sun was low. I can feel a light upon my face; there is a light upon my face,—a red light, isn't there, Dimond?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the sky? I'm sure the sky is very beautiful. Isn't it, Dimond?"

"Well, yes, sir. It's a very fine afternoon; but, if my corns don't deceive me—asking your pardon for talking of 'em, sir,—there'll be some rain before long," added the prosaic Dimond.

"Never mind your corns, Dimond!" exclaimed the painter, impatiently; "I want you to tell me about the sky. I have always fancied one might do something good with an Andromeda standing out in sharp relief against an evening sky, with nothing but the rock and the low line of purple sea, and with one white sea-gull hovering on the edge of the water," he soliloquized; while Dimond looked doubtfully to windward and pondered on the prophetic shootings of his corns.

"Tell me about the sky!" cried Mr. Crawford; "a broad band of deep rose colour melting into amethyst, and then a pale transparent opal—eh, Dimond?"

"I don't know about opal, sir; but there's a bluish and greenish way with it—something like that bad lumpy glass you see sometimes in wash-house windows."

"Washhouse windows! Oh, Dimond, go home and get me Shakspeare—the second volume of the tragedies,—and I'll give you a lesson in reading. You shall read me the description of Cleopatra before we go back to dinner."

The factotum obeyed, nothing loth to escape from that trying cross-examination about the sky; and the painter sat alone by the sea,

listening to the low harmonies of the waves, and pondering that possible picture of Andromeda. He could fancy every curve of the beautiful rounded form, sharply defined against a sombre background of rock; the dark streaming hair; the white, lovely face faintly tinged with the last rays of sunset; the sad despairing eyes looking seaward for the monster. Andromeda's pale beauty filled the painter's mind. He heard the dull moaning of the pitiless waves, the sighing of the night-winds amidst the victim's hair; he could almost fancy he heard the swooping wings of the deliverer's steed: and thus beguiled by sounds that were not, it is scarcely strange that he did not hear sounds that were,—the silken rustling of a woman's dress, the soft fluttering of a woman's shawl.

"I may dream of pictures, but I shall never paint again!" cried William Crawford, hopelessly.

A gentle hand was laid upon his arm as he spoke, and he awoke from that vision of Andromeda to know that there was a living, breathing woman by his side.

"Oh yes, you will paint again, Mr. Crawford. The trial is a bitter one; but, please God, it will not be enduring. Why did you leave me to find out what happened?"

"Mrs. Champernowne!"

"Yes; the woman whose friendship you rejected so cruelly last April, and who comes now to offer it once more—on her knees, if you like. I think one might almost venture to fall upon one's knees in this delightfully lonely place."

"Mrs. Champernowne!"

"Call me Georgina," said the widow, in her lowest and most harmonious accents. "I have come to offer you my friendship—and to-day friendship means anything you like. I have learnt to hate my own selfishness since that day at Kensington. I have learnt to know that a woman cannot live her own life; that the time will come sooner or later when the presence of one dear companion will be necessary to her existence, when the loss of one friend will take every charm from her life. I have missed you so cruelly, William—so cruelly. You don't know what a dreary season this summer just departed has been to me."

"My darling, can I believe—can I imagine——"

This waking dream—the tender words sounding in his ears, the tender hands clinging round his arms—seemed to the painter to constitute a far wilder vision than any dream of Andromeda. And yet it was all a sweet reality: the tender hands were warm with life, and sent a magnetic thrill to the very core of his heart.

"My darling, do you want to make me mad? Oh, Georgina! your presence here is like nothing but a dream. But if I wake presently to find that you have been trifling with me, I shall die. The anguish of such a disappointment would kill me."

"Do you know that you have behaved very badly to me?" said the

widow. "You must have known that I loved you. Remember how humbly I besought your friendship; and you scorned me and sent me away, just because I was not ready to renounce my precious liberty at a moment's notice for your pleasure. I think you might have had patience with me a little longer, Mr. Crawford. Rubens would never have had three wives if he had not shown a little more forbearance to womanly caprice. But I forgive you that offence. What I cannot forgive is your cruelty in letting me remain ignorant of this sorrow that has come upon you lately. You ought to have known that the more uncertain and hard to please a woman may be in a general way, the more fitted she is to play the ministering angel on occasions. Yes, Mr. Crawford, it was very cruel of you. All through the summer I have been thinking of you, and wondering about you,—wondering what you were doing, wondering why you did not relent and come and see me. It was only this morning that I learned what had happened, from a little gossiping paragraph in a newspaper. I ordered my carriage, and drove straight to the Fountains, where I *made* the servants tell me your whereabouts."

"My darling—my angel! Are you laughing at me, Georgina? or may I really call you by these dear names?"

"You may call me anything you please, if you will call me your wife-by-and-bye. Helen Vicary is with me. I only gave her twenty minutes' notice about the journey. Do you know what I said to her?"

"No indeed, dearest."

"I am going down to Dorsetshire, Helen, to ask Mr. Crawford to marry me. Pack your things immediately, and be sure you put a white dress in your trunk; for in all probability I shall want you to be my bridesmaid."

"Mrs. Champernowne, this is pity! I will not accept such a sacrifice. My calamity has fallen upon me by God's will, and I will bear it bravely. I will not trade upon it in order to win from a woman's generosity that which I could not obtain from her love."

"Was there ever such a provoking creature?" cried Mrs. Champernowne. "Must I reiterate the confession of my folly? I did not know what I was doing that day when I rejected your love. It was only afterwards, when the days and weeks went by, and I was obliged to endure my existence without you—it was only then that I knew I had lost something without which life was worthless to me. Am I to tell you again and again how dearly I love you? I have loved you so long, that I cannot tell you when my love began. But it is possible that my humiliation comes too late. You have learnt to forget me—or worse, perhaps, you have learnt to love some one else as you once loved me."

"To forget you—to love another woman after having known you—my idol—my goddess! I love you to distraction. My only fear is that compassion, generosity, self-abnegation——"

"Self-abnegation! You ought to know that I am the most selfish of

women. But here is your servant. Will you take my arm to go back to the hotel? I have apartments in the same hotel, and poor Helen is waiting for her dinner. Will you tell your servant to follow us, and trust yourself to *me*, William?"

Would he? The sweet magnetic thrill went to the core of his heart once more as Georgina Champenowne slipped her wrist under his arm. How gently she guided his footsteps! how easy the walk was to him by her side! He was no longer blind. He possessed something better than eyesight, in the protection of the woman he loved.

Before the month was out there was a quiet wedding at Callesly Bay; and the letter which gently broke to Florence the tidings of her father's affliction was no ill-spelt missive from the factotum, but an affectionate feminine epistle, signed "Georgina Crawford," and written when the painter and his wife were on the eve of a journey to Italy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A COMMERCIAL CRISIS.

THE autumn wore away, and the Pevenshall coverts afforded sport for a succession of visitors. This second autumn of Mr. Lobyer's married life was very much like the first. The only change worthy of record was the fact that, day by day, Flo saw less of her husband, and more of Sir Nugent Evershed. Howden Park was so near the millionaire's handsome dwelling-place, and Sir Nugent was such a popular person, that it was scarcely strange if the young mistress of Pevenshall deferred to him in all her arrangements, and considered no dinner-party complete without his presence. If Mrs. Lobyer had elected the elegant young baronet as her chief friend and adviser, there was no one to gainsay her election. Vague murmurs and piquant little whispers might circulate freely within a given radius of Pevenshall; but Florence was, of course, the last person likely to hear the little whispers, and not by any means a person to be warned or affrighted by the first breath of scandal if it had reached her.

Cecil was ill in London; Mr. Crawford was loitering on a sweet honeymoon ramble in the fairest pathways of Italy; and Mr. Lobyer was absorbed in gloomy watchfulness of the money-market and the cotton trade, on the horizon of which prosaic world a great cloud had been gathering during the last few months. There had been awful crashes in the commercial world; thunderbolts falling suddenly in the fairest places. Mr. Lobyer and his Manchester friends held solemn conclave in the millionaire's snuggery, and discoursed of the failures amongst the mighty with grave ominous faces, but with a certain unction and relish nevertheless.

Florence did not even pretend to be interested in the commercial crisis or the commercial earthquakes. "Everybody in our way is being

ruined, I understand," she said gaily to her intimates at the breakfast-table. "Gray shirtings are obstinately bent on being dull, and those foolish people in America are putting us to all sorts of inconvenience; and everybody who sells cotton is going to be ruined—at least, that's what I gather from the gloomy tenor of Mr. Lobyer's conversation. But that sort of thing is a monomania with very rich people, is it not? The more billions a man possesses the more obstinately he broods upon the idea that he must ultimately die in a workhouse. I have heard of men with billions cutting their throats under the influence of that idea about the workhouse. But seriously I do hope that we shall not be ruined. It would be so dreadful to have one's carpets hung out of the up-stair windows, and dirty men making inventories of one's china."

Thus discoursed Mrs. Lobyer, in her gayest and most delightful manner, to the extreme amusement of her chosen friends, to whom the cabala of the cotton trade was as dark a mystery as to herself. But there were one or two grave business men seated at that sumptuous breakfast-table to whom Mrs. Lobyer's frivolous talk seemed like the twittering of some innocent bird, which is premonitory of a tempest.

The painter's daughter went her own way, and there was no friendly hand to stay her progress on that dangerous path which a woman is apt to take when she wanders at her own sweet will. She was not happy. Already the glories and splendours of her life were beginning to grow flat and stale. She had sold herself for a price, and the price had been freely paid to her; but of late she had begun to wonder whether the barter of womanly pride and maidenly purity had been made on the most profitable terms within the possibilities of the matrimonial market. Pevenshall Place was a most lordly mansion; but it seemed a poor thing to be mistress of a *parvenu's* dwelling-place, when in the remote depths of her inner consciousness lurked the conviction that she might have reigned in the quaint old tapestried chambers of Howden, and held her place among the magnates of the land, by the indisputable right of rank, instead of the half-contemptuous sufferance accorded to money. She was not happy; that faculty for womanly tenderness and devotion which constitutes woman's highest charm and most perilous weakness had not yet been awakened in this young wife's heart. Sir Nugent Evershed's companionship was very agreeable to her; his devotion was the most delicious food supplied to that all-devouring monster, feminine vanity. But no pulse in Florence Lobyer's heart beat the quicker for the baronet's coming; no blank place in her life bore witness to his absence when he left her. She liked him; and she bitterly regretted not having met him in the days when she was Florence Crawford. But if there was indeed one tender spot in her heart, one remnant of girlish romance still lingering in her breast, it was not this elegant baronet, but a dark-eyed, bearded young painter, whose image was enshrined in that one sacred corner of the worldly soul. Sitting alone in her room, Mrs. Lobyer was apt to look

pensively at Philip Foley's little *chef d'œuvre*, and to wonder about the painter as she looked.

"I dare say he is married by this time," she thought, "and has set up a house for himself somewhere in that dreadful Islington. I can fancy his wife one of those gigantic creatures whom vulgar men call fine women," mused Flo, as she lifted her eyes to the *duchesse*-glass in which her slender little figure was reflected.

But if the one green spot in the arid waste of a worldly nature was given to the landscape-painter, it was no less certain that Sir Nugent Evershed's presence was eminently calculated to endanger the domestic peace of Pevenshall. If his delicate consideration, his quiet homage, his apparently unselfish devotion, did not imperil Flo's position as a wife, they had at least the effect of rendering her husband day by day more hateful in her eyes. She had never liked him, but she had married him with the honest intention of trying to like him; just as some people go through their lives with the intention of learning the German language or thorough-bass. She had tried perhaps a little, but had speedily given up the attempt in despair. And from the hour of her rencontre with Miss De Raymond she had considered herself privileged to dislike and despise the man whom she had married.

She had quarrelled with him for the first time in her life during the last few weeks; and though the dispute had arisen out of some trifle scarcely worthy of remembrance, it had not been the less bitter. Hard words had been uttered on both sides; the hardest perhaps by the impetuous Flo, who was apt to say even more than she meant when she felt herself aggrieved and injured.

"Thank you very much for all the civil things you've said to me, Mrs. Lobyer. I think I know *you* pretty well after the charming candour with which you have favoured me to-day; but I don't think you quite know *me* yet. You are very young and very inexperienced, and you have a lesson or two to learn before you are much older. I hope I may have the satisfaction of teaching you one of those lessons."

This was Mr. Lobyer's parting speech as he left his wife's apartment. The vague threat occasioned Florence neither alarm nor anxiety. She would have been ready to apologize to her husband if he had given her the opportunity of doing so; but anything in the nature of a threat was eminently calculated to steel her heart against the lord and master whom at the best she had only tolerated.

After this domestic storm there came a deadly calm, during which the husband and wife treated each other with frigid politeness; but little by little the storm-cloud passed away from Flo's sunshiny nature, and she drifted back into the good-humoured *nonchalance* of manner with which she had been wont to accept Mr. Lobyer, and all other necessary evils.

Of late Mr. Lobyer had been, if possible, even less agreeable than usual. A dense gloom had come down upon him; and systematically as

his guests were wont to ignore his presence, there were times when he brought a chilling influence into the brilliantly lighted drawing-room, as of a man newly arrived from some frozen region, and bearing the icy blasts of that region in the folds of his garments. Flo made one or two feeble attempts to penetrate this gloom—merely as a matter of duty,—but found herself rudely repulsed; so she concluded that the monomania which is the peculiar chastisement of billionaires had attacked her husband, and that his gloomy musings were darkened by the shadow of a work-house. After having come to this conclusion she troubled herself with no further anxiety on a subject which was foreign to the usual current of her thoughts. Mr. Lobyer went his way, and his wife went hers; and that delightful calm which generally reigns in households where husband and wife are utterly indifferent to each other reigned for a while at Pevenshall, and might have continued if a most insignificant event had not occurred to cloud the serene horizon. The insignificant event was the resignation of one of those superb creatures the matched footmen. How the calamity arose Mrs. Lobyer was unable fully to ascertain; but it appeared that the master of Pevenshall had expressed himself to the superb creature in language which such a creature, knowing his own value, could not and would not brook from any master living. The footman had immediately tendered his resignation, had received his salary, and departed, leaving his brother lackey in lonely grandeur, and as much deteriorated in value as a Sèvres vase which has lost its companion vase.

Flo did not hear of her loss till the man had left Pevenshall. On receiving the dismal tidings she abandoned herself for the moment to despair.

"They were so exactly the same height," she cried, piteously, "and the same breadth across the shoulders. One might get two men the same height easily enough, I dare say; but what is the use of that, if one man is a lifeguardsman and the other a threadpaper? And now Jones is gone, Tomkins is positively useless, unless I can match him. Oh, Sir Nugent, you really must assist me to find a decent match for Tomkins."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Lobyer; "I'll have no more of your matched footmen; fellows who are as insolent on the strength of their legs as your *primi tenore* on the strength of their voices. I know a man who can take Jones's place at a minute's notice."

"But will he match?" exclaimed the despairing Flo; "that is the question; will he match Tomkins?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," answered Mr. Lobyer, coolly. "He'll suit me, and that's enough."

Florence opened her eyes to their widest extent, and remained for some moments staring fixedly at her husband, as in a trance. Brutal though the man was by nature, he had chosen heretofore to let his wife exercise unquestioned authority in all household arrangements; and that

he should interfere with her now, that he should come between her and those sacred symbols of her state, the matched footmen, was something more than she could understand.

For a moment her breath seemed to fail her; but she recovered herself presently, and replied with fitting dignity,—

“You may engage what servants you please, Mr. Lobyer; but I decline to be waited upon by any one who does not match Tomkins.”

After which Mrs. Lobyer summoned the housekeeper, and requested that functionary to make arrangements for the earliest possible filling up of the hiatus in the servants' hall; and having so far asserted her position, Flo resumed the occupation of the moment, and dismissed the subject of the twin lackeys from her thoughts.

At dinner, however, she was reminded of her bereavement by the appearance of a stumpy, pale-faced man, in a livery which was a great deal too large for him; but who moved about amongst the other servants with a quiet self-possession and a noiseless footfall which spoke well for his past training.

She saw no more of this man till the following day, when he came into the morning-room, where she happened to be for a few minutes alone with Sir Nugent, trying a new song which he had brought her. The strange footman came into the room to remove some flowers from a *jardinière* in one of the windows. Flo turned round from the piano to see what he was doing.

“Who told you to move those geraniums?” she asked.

“One of the gardeners sent for them, ma'am.”

The man performed his duty noiselessly, and retired.

“I don't like that man!” exclaimed the baronet, as the door closed on Mr. Lobyer's *protégé*.

“He seems a very good servant, but he doesn't match Tomkins,” sighed Flo.

“He does his work quietly enough,” answered Sir Nugent, “but he is not *like* a servant.”

“How do you mean?”

“There's something in his manner that I don't like; a watchfulness—a stealthy, underhand kind of manner.”

“Is there? I haven't noticed it. He might be as stealthy as an assassin in an Italian opera, so far as I am concerned, if he only matched Tomkins.”

After this Mrs. Lobyer took no further notice of the servant who had been hired by her husband in place of the splendid Jones. She submitted to his presence very patiently, relying on the ultimate success of her housekeeper's researches amongst magnificent creatures of the Tomkins stamp. But Sir Nugent Evershed—who had no right to take objection to any arrangement in the house at which he was so constant a visitor—could not refrain from expressing his dislike of the strange footman;

while that individual, by some fatality, seemed always to be on duty during the baronet's visits.

"I think you must have a mystical attraction for the man, as strong in its way as your antipathy to him," said Flo; "for I very seldom see him except when you are here. Really the prejudice is so absurd on your part that I can't help laughing at you."

"I never could endure a sneak," answered Sir Nugent, "and that man is a sneak. I will tell you something more than that, Mrs. Lobyer; he is not a footman."

"Not a footman! What is he then? Surely not a gentleman in disguise!"

"Decidedly not; but he is no footman. There is an unmistakable stamp upon a footman—a servants' hall mark—which is not on that man."

Mr. Lobyer heard nothing of the baronet's objection to his *protégé*; for Mr. Lobyer had absented himself from Pevenshall of late, and was heard of now in Manchester, now in London, anon in Paris. There were vacant chambers now in the luxurious mansion; for as her guests of August and September dropped off, Mrs. Lobyer did not care to invite fresh visitors without the concurrence of her husband. Even while going her own way, she had always made some shadowy pretence of deferring to his wishes; and he was in a manner necessary to her—a social lay figure, without which her drawing-room was incomplete. His spasmodic departures to Manchester had not interfered with the arrangements of the mansion; but now that he was absent day after day, and week after week, Mrs. Lobyer felt herself called upon to maintain a certain sobriety in the household over which she presided.

Visitors who had been staying in the house dropped off, and no other guests came to fill the vacant chambers. No invitations were issued for dinner-parties or hunting-breakfasts in the millionaire's absence. Major and Mrs. Henniker, and one inane young lady, were now the only guests; and Florence would have found the spacious rooms very dreary if it had not been for the perpetual droppings in of Sir Nugent Evershed, whose horses spent the best part of their existence between Howden and Pevenshall.

He came perpetually. There was always some pretext for his coming, some reason for his loitering when he came. He had turned architect and philanthropist, and was intensely interested in those schools and cottages which Flo was going to build; and the plans, and specifications, and estimates for which were the subjects of interminable discussion. Sometimes deaf Mrs. Henniker, sometimes the inane young lady, played propriety during these long visits of the baronet. Sometimes, but very rarely, Sir Nugent and Mrs. Lobyer sat alone in the drawing-room or morning-room, or strolled up and down the terrace on some fine autumnal morning, discussing the schools and cottages.

It was upwards of a month since the new footman had replaced the splendid Jones; and during the best part of the man's service Mr. Lobyer had been absent from home. Flo's spirits drooped in the empty house. She suffered acutely from that dismal reaction which is the penalty that must be paid sooner or later by all who have tried to create for themselves a spurious kind of happiness from perpetual excitement. The long dreary evenings sorely tried Mrs. Lobyer's patience. Mrs. Henniker's Berlin wool work, the inane young lady's performances on the piano, the Major's long stories of Indian warfare, were all alike vanity and vexatiousness to her; and she must have perished for lack of some distraction, if it had not been for her schools and cottages, and Sir Nugent Evershed.

He came to Pevenshall one cold October afternoon, when Major Henniker had driven his wife and the inane young lady to Chiverley on a shopping expedition, leaving Florence alone in the drawing-room with a very ponderous historical work newly arrived from the London librarian; a work which the young matron set herself to read with a desperate resolution.

"I really must improve my mind," she said; "my ideas of history have never soared above Pinnock, and I have all sorts of old-fashioned notions. I don't want anything at Chiverley; so I shall stay at home this afternoon, dear Mrs. Henniker, and devote myself to the Tudors. I am going to read about that dear, good, high-principled Henry VIII., who has only been properly understood within the last few years."

When the pony phaeton had started with her three guests, Mrs. Lobyer ensconced herself in one of the most luxurious of the easy chairs, and opened her big volume in a very business-like manner. The day was cold and windy, and fires burned cheerily at both ends of the spacious apartment.

Perhaps no historical work has ever yet been written in which the first half-dozen pages were not just a little dry. The grave historian has of late years borrowed many hints from the novelist, but he has not yet been bold enough to make a dash at his subject *in medias res*, and to start his first chapter with "'*Ventre St. Gris*,' said the king, 'I have heard enough of this matter, and will brook no further parley; the man dies to-morrow!'" Nor has he yet deigned to wind himself insidiously into his theme under cover of two travellers riding side by side through the sunset.

Mrs. Lobyer was beginning to yawn piteously over a grave disquisition upon the merits and demerits of feudalism and villeinage, when a servant announced Sir Nugent Evershed.

"My dear Sir Nugent, this is kind of you," cried Flo, closing the big volume with a sigh of relief; "I didn't expect to see you again for an age after the dreary evening we gave you on Tuesday."

"I have never spent a dreary evening in this house," answered the baronet, as he laid his hat and riding-whip on a little table, and seated

himself in a low chair very near Flo's; "you ought to know that, Mrs. Lobyer."

There was some shade of intention in his tone; but Florence Lobyer was accustomed to that tone, and knew how to parry all such impalpable attacks.

"Indeed, I do not know anything of the kind," she said, in her liveliest manner; "I thought you might possibly be a little tired of Major Henniker's Indian stories. You must have heard some of them several times. But he certainly tells them well."

"I confess to being heartily tired of them notwithstanding. But the attraction which brings me to Pevenshall, in spite of myself sometimes, is not Major Henniker.

Flo gave that little look of innocent surprise which is always at the command of a thorough-paced coquette.

"You have brought me some new idea for my cottages," she said, pointing to a roll of paper in the baronet's hand.

"Yes; I have a friend in Oxfordshire who has built schools for his poor, and I've brought you a sketch of his buildings."

After this there was a good deal of discussion about the merits of Tudor architecture as opposed to the Swiss-cottage or Norman-tower style of building. And then the baronet and Mrs. Lobyer began to talk of other things; and by some subtle transition the conversation assumed a more interesting and more personal character; and Flo found herself talking to Sir Nugent more confidentially than she had ever talked to him before, in spite of their intimate acquaintance. They had been so much together, and yet had been so rarely alone; that there had been little opportunity for confidential converse between them. This October afternoon, with the early dusk gathering in the room, and the fires burning red and low, seemed the very occasion for friendly confidence. Flo talked with her usual candour of her father, herself, her husband, the empty frivolity of her life; and all at once she found that the conversation had assumed a tone which every experienced coquette knows to be dangerous. Sir Nugent was beginning to tell his companion how terrible a sacrifice she had made in marrying Thomas Lobyer, and how bitterly he above all other men mourned and deplored that sacrifice.

Even at this point Flo's liveliness did not desert her.

"Please don't call it a sacrifice, Sir Nugent; nothing annoys me so much as for my friends to take that tone about me," she said. "I married Mr. Lobyer with my eyes open, and I have no right to complain of the bargain. He has given me everything he ever promised to give me."

"But can he give you the love you were created to inspire? No, Florence; you know he cannot give you that. There is not a field labourer on this estate less able to comprehend you or less worthy of your love than the man you call your husband."

Before Florence could reprimand her admirer's audacity he had pounced on the little hand lying loosely on the cushion of her chair, and had lifted it to his lips. As she drew it indignantly away from him, and as he raised his head after bending it over the little hand, he uttered a sudden exclamation and started to his feet, looking across Mrs. Lobyer's head at the great glass doors of the palm-house, which opened out of the drawing-room.

"I knew that man was a spy!" he exclaimed, snatching his riding-whip from the table.

"What man?" cried Flo, alarmed by the unwonted fierceness of Sir Nugent's face.

"Mr. Lobyer's footman. He has been amusing himself by listening to our conversation. I recognized his agreeable face flattened against one of those glass doors just this moment. Don't be frightened: there is not the least occasion for alarm; but I must ascertain the meaning of this man's insolence."

The baronet went into the palm-house, and closed the doors after him. Flo followed him to the doors, but could follow him no farther; for she found that he had bolted as well as closed them.

"Why did he do that?" she thought. "I hope he is not going to make any *esclandre*. What does it matter if the man did listen? I dare say many servants are fond of listening."

She looked through the doors, but it was very dark in the palm-house; and if Sir Nugent and the footman were there, she could not see them. There were other glass doors opening on to the terrace, and in all probability the man had made his escape by that way.

"I hope Sir Nugent won't be so absurd as to follow him," thought Flo. "He is getting very tiresome. I suppose he has been allowed to come here too often. I shall have to be dignified and make a quarrel with him."

She stood peering into the darkness for some time, but she could neither hear nor see anything in the palm-house. She went to one of the windows and looked out upon the terrace, but she could see nothing there; so she seated herself by the fire, and waited very impatiently for Sir Nugent's return.

She had been waiting more than half an hour when he came back through the palm-house.

"Well," she cried, "what does it all mean?"

"It means that the man is a private detective set to watch you by your husband," answered Sir Nugent, quietly. "I dare say a person in that line of life gets a good many thrashings; but I don't think he can ever have received a sounder drubbing than the one I've just given him."

"A detective, set to watch *me*!" echoed Flo, with an air of stupefaction.

"Yes, Florence. I made the man acknowledge his calling, and name

his employer. If you doubt me, he shall repeat his confession for your satisfaction. Those sort of fellows think nothing of going over to the enemy. I have made him anxious to serve me by the promise of handsome payment; and I have made him afraid to disoblige me by the threat of another thrashing. The proceeding is worthy of your husband, is it not?"

"But what does it mean?" cried Flo; "what in heaven's name does it all mean?"

"I am ashamed to tell you."

"But I insist on knowing."

"You insist?"

"I do."

"And you will not reproach me for any pain my revelation may cause you?"

"No, no."

"Then, if you ask me what I really think of this detestable business, I will tell you my thoughts in the plainest words. I think your husband is a scoundrel, and that he has placed that wretched sneak in this house in the hope that he might be able to trump up some flimsy evidence against your truth and honour as his wife; evidence that would serve Mr. Lobyer in the divorce court."

"Evidence against *me*!—the divorce court! Are you mad, Sir Nugent?"

"No, Florence; I am only telling you the naked truth in all its hideousness. Forgive me if the truth is horrible to you. I wrung the worst part of that truth out of the spy's throat just now, when I caught him and grappled with him yonder. He spoke pretty plainly; for I think he knew he had never had a nearer chance of being strangled than he had at that moment. Mrs. Lobyer, your husband's conduct has been an enigma to me from the first day in which we met in Switzerland; but in the happiness I found in your society I was content to leave that enigma unsolved. To-day, for the first time, I read the riddle. Thomas Lobyer hated me as a boy; Thomas Lobyer hates me as a man. He has chosen to cultivate my acquaintance down here because my acquaintance happened to be useful to him amongst people with whom wealth does not stand for everything. He has made use of me, hating me while he did so, and holding himself in readiness for the first chance of vengeance. And now he thinks the chance is in his hand; and you are to be sacrificed to the meanest spite that ever festered in the heart of a villain."

"I don't understand," murmured Florence, helplessly, "I don't understand."

"It is difficult for a woman to understand such baseness. Your husband has set his spy to watch you. He knows that you are good, and true, and pure; but he knows something else besides that."

"What does he know?"

"He knows that I love you, Florence. Yes, the time has come in which I must speak plainly; the time has come in which you must leave this house, which is no longer a fitting shelter for you. Mr. Lobyer knows that I love you,—has known as much, in all likelihood, for some time past; but he has waited very patiently for his opportunity, and the opportunity, as he thinks, has arrived. He has set his spy to watch us, and no doubt the spy is by this time well up in his lesson."

"What lesson? What has the man to discover?" cried Flo, indignantly. "You must know, Sir Nugent Evershed, that if you had dared to speak to me before to-day, as you have spoken now, you would have been forbidden this house."

The fragile little figure seemed to grow taller by two or three inches as Mrs. Lobyer reproved her admirer. She felt as much outraged by his audacity as if no spice of coquetry had ever tainted the purity of her nature. She was just one of those women who may balance themselves for ever upon the narrow boundary-wall between propriety and disgrace, and never run the smallest risk of toppling over the wrong side.

"If this man is a spy, I have no fear of him," she exclaimed, resolutely. "Let him go back to his employer to tell of his wasted labour."

"Such a man as that will not allow his labour to be wasted. Your husband does not want to hear the truth: he is ready to accept any falsehood that will serve his purpose; and that man is a less accomplished rogue than I take him for if he cannot get enough out of the tittle-tattle of the servants' hall to make a case for some pettifogging lawyer; a case that will break down ignominiously perhaps, but which will be strong enough to tarnish your name for ever and ever."

Florence looked at her lover with a colourless, bewildered face, in which there was a brave expression of defiance nevertheless. Sir Nugent Evershed was not a good man; and if Thomas Lobyer the parvenu had basely plotted the disgrace and ruin of his young wife, Sir Nugent the country gentleman was not above profiting by the *roturier's* baseness. He did not think there was any infamy in his conduct. He admired Florence very much. He loved her as much as it was natural to him to love anybody except himself, and he felt most genuine indignation against her husband. But he felt at the same time that this shameful business came to pass very conveniently for him, as it was eminently calculated to bring matters to a crisis; just as he was beginning to be rather tired of a flirtation which had pursued its even tenor for the last twelve months without giving him any firmer hold upon the heart of the woman he loved.

The crisis had come; and he discovered all at once that he, the accomplished courtier, the experienced Lovelace, had been very much mistaken in his estimate of this pretty, frivolous, coquettish young matron. He had expected to find Florence Lobyer utterly weak and helpless in the hour of trial; and lo! to his surprise and confusion, she turned upon him

resolute and defiant as a heroine, and he felt his eyelids droop under her fearless gaze.

"Why do you tell me this?" she asked. "If the tittle-tattle of the servants' hall can injure my good name, it is you who have brought that injury upon me. If your visits here in my husband's absence have been too frequent, the blame lies with you, who have had twice my experience of the world, and should have protected me against my own imprudence. I have trusted you as a gentleman and a man of honour, Sir Nugent Evershed. Am I to think that you are neither?"

"Think nothing of me, except that I love you, Florence, and that I am only anxious to protect you from a scoundrel. The presence of a hired spy in this house, and the confession I wrung from the spy, are sufficient evidence of a deep-laid scheme. You must leave this house, Florence."

"I must, must I?" Mrs. Lobyer repeated, innocently; "but when, and how?"

"To-night," whispered the baronet; "and with me."

Flo made her lover a low curtsy. "I ought to be very much flattered by your desire to burden yourself with me at the very moment when it seems my husband is trying to get rid of me," she said; "but I have no intention of leaving Pevenshall, Sir Nugent. If my husband has been pleased to set a spy over my actions, it shall be my business to show him that I am not afraid of spies. But it is a quarter to seven, and I must run away to dress. Good afternoon, and good-bye, Sir Nugent. Perhaps so long as the detective remains, and Mr. Lobyer stays away, it will be just as well for you to discontinue your visits."

"As you please, Mrs. Lobyer," answered the baronet, with a stately sulkiness.

He retired from the apartment, and waited in the portico while his horse was being brought round to him. He had known what it was to fail in his character of a Lovelace before to-day; but he had never before experienced a failure so ignominious and unexpected.

Flo tripped off to her room, smiling defiance upon insolent admirers and private detectives; but when the door of her dressing-room was closed behind her, and she found herself alone in that sacred chamber, she buried her face in the pillows of a low sofa, and burst into tears.

"What a miserable, empty, frivolous life it is!" she cried; "and what a despicable creature I am!"

The private detective disappeared from Pevenshall after his encounter with Sir Nugent Evershed. Flo made some inquiries about the man next day, and was informed by her housekeeper that he had left in a most mysterious manner, without a word of warning.

"But I never liked the man, ma'am," said the housekeeper; "there was something underhand in his manner, and I always used to feel a cold shivery sensation when he came near me."

Sir Nugent Evershed came no more to the splendid mansion on the hill; and Mrs. Lobyer waited very quietly for whatever fate had in store for her. There was no sign of Mr. Lobyer; neither letter nor message to announce his coming. The inane young lady returned to her relatives; and Flo was fain to entreat her dear Major and Mrs. Henniker to remain with her, lest she should be left quite alone in that spacious dwelling.

"I might send for my aunt Jane," she thought, when she brooded upon her position; "but I think a very little of aunt Jane would be the death of me just now."

A change came over the spirit of the young matron. She was no longer the airy volatile creature who had wasted her days in skipping from one amusement to another, in exchanging an extravagant toilette of the morning for a more extravagant toilette of the afternoon. She undertook a gigantic enterprise in the way of Berlin wool work, and sat hour after hour by her dear Mrs. Henniker's side, counting stitches and picking up glittering beads on the point of her needle. She listened with sublime patience to the major's Indian stories, and yet all this time the traditionary fox was gnawing its way to her heart—emblem of all hidden care courageously endured.

She knew that a crisis in her life had come. She knew that there was something ominous in Mr. Lobyer's long absence, his obstinate silence. She remembered the foolish recklessness with which she had provoked and defied scandal. Above all, she remembered Mr. Lobyer's vague threat on the occasion of her one serious misunderstanding with him; and connecting that threat with the spy's presence and Sir Nugent Evershed's positive assertions, Florence Lobyer saw herself menaced by no small danger.

Her husband was a scoundrel; she had known that for a long time. False to her from first to last himself, he was yet quite capable of wreaking some terrible revenge upon her for the shadow of falsehood to him.

"I know that he can be pitiless," she thought. "I remember his face that day after our quarrel, and I know that I have no mercy to expect from him. I have not been a good wife, and I can scarcely wonder if he wishes to get rid of me; but if he had loved me when he married me, honestly and truly, as I believed that he did, I think I should have done my duty."

Mrs. Lobyer waited very patiently for the unknown danger which she dreaded from her husband's vengeance; but the days and weeks drifted by, and no prophetic cloud darkened the quiet horizon. This dull period of suspense was the most painful ordeal she had ever been called upon to endure in all her thoughtless life, and it is to be recorded to her credit that she endured it bravely.

The cloud appeared at last—a big black cloud, but not prophetic of that social tempest which Flo had dreaded. The cloud was the shadow of commercial failure. At first faint rumours came to Pevenshall, then more

definite reports, at last the fatal tidings. The greatest of all the great crashes of the year was the crash with which the master of Pevenshall went to ruin. The pitiless Money Article recorded the great man's destruction very briefly :—Mr. Lobyer, of the Lobyer Cotton Mills, and King Street, Manchester; of Mortimer Gardens, Hyde Park; and Pevenshall Place, Yorkshire, had failed for half a million.

The next tidings that came to Pevenshall were of even a darker nature; so dark and terrible, indeed, that Major Henniker felt himself called upon to despatch two telegrams in Mrs. Lobyer's interest,—one to Rome, where Mr. Crawford and his wife had newly arrived, the other to Russell Square, summoning Mrs. Bushby post-haste to the succour of her niece.

Before Mrs. Bushby could arrive Florence had discovered that some new calamity had befallen her, and had extorted the dismal tidings from the lips of the major himself.

The commercial crash had only been the first act of the social tragedy. There had been a second and more terrible act. While the news in the Money Article was still fresh upon men's lips, Thomas Lobyer had shot himself through the head in his Manchester counting-house.

The details of his ruin are not worth recording here. By what false moves upon the chess-board of commerce, by what mad lust for gain, by what sudden impulses of caution at moments when rashness would have been prudence, by what reckless speculation in the hour when timidity would have been salvation, by what fatal steps upon the speculator's downward road he had hurried to his destruction, can have little interest here. It may be set down to his credit as a thoroughly practical and business-like person, that no act of generosity had ever made him the poorer by a sixpence, and that no honourable scruple had ever hindered him from enriching himself at the expense of other people. His iron hand had closed relentlessly upon every chance of profit, his iron heart had been adamant to every plea. If the end of all was failure, he had at least some title to the respect of the practical, and no man could insult his memory by that half-contemptuous pity which a money-making world bestows on the good-natured ne'er-do-weel, who has been no one's enemy but his own.

THE EPILOGUE.

AFTER the terrible crash which ended her brief married life, Florence Lobyer took shelter with her aunt Bushby until such time as her father should return to England, and be able to receive her at the Fountains. Tender letters, dictated by that generous father and written in Georgina's elegant Italian hand, came to comfort the poor terror-stricken young widow.

No Aladdin palace floating skyward through the thin air ever vanished more completely from its sometime possessor than the splendours of Pevenshall vanished from her who had once been the queen of that gorgeous mansion. Of all the grandeurs of her married life Mrs. Lobyer did not carry away with her so much as a trinket. Iron-hearted functionaries swooped down upon the noble dwelling which honest, hard-working Thomas Lobyer the elder had created to be an abiding monument of an industrious and honourable career, and the widow was given to understand that the gown upon her back and the wedding ring on her finger were about the only possessions she had any right to carry away with her.

Poor Florence was glad to part with the costly frivolities for which she had sold herself; she was glad to separate herself from every evidence of that ill-omened bargain. She looked back upon her past life with unspeakable horror. The letters found in her husband's desk had confirmed Sir Nugent Evershed's suspicions of that husband's baseness. They contained ample proof that Thomas Lobyer had been engaged in the attempt to get up evidence against his wife's honour at the moment when commercial ruin overtook him, and that he had plotted a vengeance that should involve the enemy of his boyhood and the wife of whom he had grown weary in the same destruction.

It was scarcely strange, therefore, if Florence was glad to escape from Pevenshall, and from everything associated with her married life. She secluded herself in one of the remoter chambers of her aunt's house, and would see no one except Lady Cecil, who had early tidings of her friend's affliction, and who came to see her, looking very pale and weak after that tedious illness through which Mr. O'Boyneville had nursed her so patiently.

The two women embraced each other tenderly. For some minutes Cecil sat in silence, with Flo's slender black-robed figure folded in her arms. Then they talked a little in low suppressed voices of the dreadful event which had occasioned the wearing of that dismal black raiment.

"You must come to Chudleigh Combe with Laurence and me," Cecil said by-and-bye. "Mr. O'Boyneville has bought the dear old place where I spent my childhood, Flo. It was the negotiation about the purchase which took him away from Pevenshall that time. Oh, Florence, I can never tell you how good he has been to me. I shall never dare to tell you how unworthy I have been of his goodness. But we are very happy now; thank God, we are completely happy now. He nursed me all through my long illness; and I used to wake and see him watching me in the dead of the night, when I was too languid to speak, and powerless to tell him that I was conscious of his goodness. It was in those long night-watches that I learnt to understand him, and now I think there is nothing in the world that could come between us."

This was all that Cecil said about herself. She stopped with her old friend for some hours; and in the course of their conversation it transpired

that Major Gordon had gone to Spanish America with a party of *savans* and explorers, on a mission which involved as much peril as could be found on any battle-field.

Flo accepted her friend's invitation, and spent some weeks in the old-fashioned house, surrounded by Devonian woodland, and within sound of the low murmur of the sea. She stayed with Cecil till she was summoned to the Fountains, where her stepmother received her with quiet tenderness that was infinitely soothing, and where she found her father just beginning to hope that he might live to paint her Andromeda.

"I am equal to either fortune," he said, turning his face towards his wife, illumined by a more beautiful smile than even his pencil had ever transferred to canvas, "for in Georgy I have something better than mortal eyesight. I have been so happy as the poor blind slave of my Delilah that I am almost afraid I may lose something by regaining my sight."

In that bright peaceful home, with all fair and pleasant images around her, Florence found it easy to forget the past. Sometimes when she lingered before the glass, arranging the bright rippling tresses under her widow's cap, the image of Sir Nugent Evershed flitted through her brain.

"I was weak enough to think that he really loved me, and that if I had been free he would have been at my feet," she thought, with a blush; "and though I have been a widow nearly a twelvemonth he has never come near me, or made the faintest sign of any interest in my fate. It was very pleasant to flirt with the foolish mistress of Pevenshall Place, but Sir Nugent is too wise to marry a bankrupt cotton-spinner's widow. I begin to think there is only one person in the world who ever truly loved me."

That one person is an individual who is rising gradually in the estimation of his fellow-men as a landscape painter, and who comes to the Fountains now and then on a Sunday evening, and seems always glad to find his way to the quiet corner where Florence sits in her widow's weeds. If the sombre dress—invested with a grace by the artistic hands of Mrs. Crawford's milliner—happens to be very becoming, it is no fault of the young widow, who owes her present charm to no coquetry of manner, but rather to a pensive gravity which the dismal close of her married life has left upon her. She is so young and so pretty that no one looking at her can doubt for a moment that the hour must come sooner or later when a new life will begin for her, and a bright future open itself before her thoughtful eyes like a sunshiny vista in one of Philip Foley's landscapes. There are people who venture to prophesy that the landscape painter will be the happy individual for whose enchantment those dismal draperies of black will be transformed into the white robes of a bride.

Meanwhile life glides smoothly by at the Fountains. Never was ministering slave more devoted to an idolized master than the elegant Georgina to her husband. The bronzes and cabinet pictures and Persian carpets and Angora cats have been removed from the Hermitage to Mr.

Crawford's dwelling, and the little retreat in the lane near Hyde Park is again in the market at the moderate rent of £700 per annum. It is scarcely necessary to say that Mrs. Champenowne's admirers were surprised and indignant when the tidings of her marriage fell like a thunderbolt amongst the ranks of her victims; but time, which brings resignation to all earthly mourners, has consoled the idolaters of the widow, and they flock to the Fountains, as they flocked to the Hermitage, to burn incense at the shrine of the most charming woman in London.

The one trouble of Mr. Crawford's married life has been but of brief duration, for the painter has regained the use of his eyes in time to see his daughter in her widow's cap, and in time to begin his *Andromeda* before the success of his *Dido* has been forgotten by the most fickle of his admirers.

Amongst the Sunday evening visitors at the Fountains appear very often Mr. and Lady Cecil O'Boynville. The barrister has fought his way into the House of Commons, and there is some talk of his speedy elevation to the bench. He has removed his household gods from Bloomsbury to sunnier regions within sight of the verdant vistas of Kensington Gardens; and Mrs. MacOlaverhouse tells her niece that she has reason to be thankful to the Providence that has given her so good a husband and so handsome an income.

Cecil lives to look once more upon Hector Gordon's wedding cards, but this time the sight brings her no pang of regret. She hands the little packet to her husband with a smile, and says,—

"I am so glad he has married again, and I hope he will be as happy—as we are."

The barrister looks up from his *Times* to reply with a vague murmur, and then resumes his reading. But presently he looks up again with his face radiant.

"I knew Valentine would make a mess of his defence in *Peter versus Piper*," he exclaimed. "That's a case I should like to have had the handling of myself."

END OF "THE LADY'S MILE."

CYPRESS IN POETRY.

POETIC offerings on the shrines of affection or friendship too often prove as deciduous as the flowers which we plant on the graves in which our first griefs lie buried. They were real, they were felt at the time; and an indulgence in the luxury of woe is not without its advantages. Few persons are so void of sentiment as not to be conscious of a transitory glow of pleasure when they contemplate the poetry which grief expresses either in the floral decoration of a tomb, or in the touching strains of an elegy. Elegies may be considered the cypress of poetry; and a volume of selected elegies might be pointed to as a rich mourning wreath amid the flowers of our national literature. For this species of poetry, it would seem, we are indebted to an exquisite sensibility which precludes the poet from suppressing any strain on his emotions. It is the channel in which the overflowing heart finds vent. It is a means of widening the circle of his sympathies, by drawing within its circumference every heart which is sensitive to the influence of the poetic art.

The severest criticism has, of course, been pronounced on the most famous of our elegies. Their elegant diction and varied imagery conceal, it is thought, the absence of true grief rather than express its presence. The all-absorbing character of this passion effaces the memory of minute and irrelevant objects. If this criticism be true there is evidence enough in many of our elegies that the poet's grief was either simulated, or had spent its force; and consequently no reader of discernment could be reasonably expected to make a hasty response to the poet's repeated calls for tears and regrets. Hence Johnson censures the commencement of the "Lycidas," as incompatible with the expression of unfeigned grief. But more genial critics have discovered, in the pleasing invocation to the laurel, the vine, and the myrtle, with which this famous elegy opens, an allusion to the poetic talents of Lycidas, and the esteem in which he was held by the gentler sex. But to prove that the dominant passion may permit such aberrations, a high authority can be quoted. On the news of his Juliet's death, Romeo's mind is filled with despair, which impels him to commit suicide. Then he, forgetting all present mention of Juliet and of his absorbing passion, utters a rhapsody on the miserable condition of the starved apothecary; and, as the shop is closed, his busy fancy represents to him, with all the vividness of present appearance, the stuffed alligators, the beggarly account of empty boxes, and the other rubbish with which the shop is stocked. But, whether the judgments of critics be wicked or charitable, we have abundant evidence that poetic fame may be acquired by the expression of personal service.

In this respect the composition of an elegy may be valuable as the composition of an epic. When he laments the death of a much-valued

friend, the sincerity of the poet may be had more regard to than when, in an epic, he describes and deploras, in language shaded by poetic colouring, the deaths of hundreds whose existence was probably apocryphal.

Among English writers the most famous elegiasts are Milton, Gray, Shelley, and Tennyson. "Lycidas," "Adonais," and "In Memoriam" represent the mental peculiarities of their authors.

These poems, on comparison, are extremely interesting. Their dissimilarity in style and versification gives pleasure to diversity of taste; and the reader will appreciate and admire that particular elegy which harmonizes best with his intellectual bias. The lovers of the pastoral will eulogize the "Lycidas;" "Adonais" will charm the admirers of the subjective school of poetry; whilst "In Memoriam," with its discursive range of topics, will elicit the sympathy of thousands who, conscious that the objects and places around us are not wanting in the elements of poetry, love to see it familiarized with our hearths and our haunts. These elegies, also, are the reflection of the taste of the period in which they were written. "Lycidas" reflects the classical taste of Milton's time. Ancient poetry supplied the models for modern poetry. The images and fabled personages of the ancient pastoral were so deeply impressed on the imagination that they were reproduced in freshly combined forms. But this species of the marvellous in poetry has long since worn out our sympathies; and if this quality is still to be relied on for winning public favour it must be whatever of the marvellous can be discovered in surrounding objects. The divinities of ancient Greece and Rome have lost their hold on the imagination. We have no longer any poetic sympathy with shepherds and their pursuits. Arcadian simplicity would be very charming if we did not know that Arcadian innocence is a myth. Our understandings repel the notion that shepherds are the pure and philosophic beings they are represented to be in pastoral poetry. But it was in obedience to the taste of his age, and in perfect harmony with the modes of thinking then prevalent, that Milton should, in his "Lycidas," represent himself and his friends as shepherds tending their flock and "telling their tale" instead of being exemplary students at college. A student's hard-working career may not have much poetry in it; but there is an earnestness, a reality about it, which the intellect can grasp, which can hardly be said of the fictitious situations created by the poet's fancy. So when he says,—

"For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, or rill,"

we recognize the description as the pure invention of fancy, and try to restrain our minds from pursuing the youthful friends through the course of their real avocations. In what a pretty fiction is their ordinary habit of rising early to their studies expressed!—

"Under the opening eyelids of the morn
We drove afield."

In the famous "Elegy in the Churchyard" this idea reappears, with the additional beautifully poetic circumstance,—

"Brushing, with hasty steps, the dews away."

But in Gray's description there is more to content the mind because there is no palpable fiction. The rustic, whose "humble toils and destiny obscure" have been described in immortal verse, may have been the creation of the poet's fancy, but he has his prototype wherever rural occupations are followed. He is not a mere ballet or masquerade rustic, as is Lycidas, a circumstance which, in spite of the beauties of expression and sentiment, and the "Doric" simplicity of versification observable in the poem, greatly detracts from its merits. There is also something incongruous in a shepherd being lost at sea. The reader feels almost disposed to exclaim, "*Mais qu'allait il faire dans cette galère?*" The translation from earth to heaven is charmingly narrated; and the peculiar circumstances under which he lost his life occasions some commotion among the divinities of Olympus. Their interest in Lycidas could scarcely have been surpassed by that which they felt for Apollo, when he fed the flocks of Admetus; or for Paris, when he lived a shepherd on Mount Ida. Lycidas (Mr. King) was on his way to Ireland, and the ship in which he was crossing the Irish Channel went down with every soul on board. As this happened during a calm at sea, the gods evince a laudable desire to show that they were not responsible for the disaster, and hold a court of inquiry. Jupiter answers for the thunder, Neptune for the sea, and Æolus for the winds, for "not a breeze had escaped from his cavern." Therefore the malediction of the poet must fall only on the ship, which he describes as—

"Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark."

The poet then calls for votive offerings of the flowerets of the early year to be strewn on the bier of Lycidas, which is represented as floating on the waters. This painting of imagination attains its climax in the apotheosis, when Lycidas becomes the guardian genius of the coast off which the ship had been lost.

It is not on a single perusal that all the manifold beauties of this poem can be discerned and appreciated. After repeated readings all its peculiar charms will be felt, and the ruggedness of its versification will be forgotten in its smooth and musical periods. But most readers of poetry read for pleasure, not for study; hence the neglect into which the "Lycidas" has fallen. Many persons would hardly compare it favourably with Tickell's "Elegy on the Death of Addison," though this is overlaid with sentiment, but possesses an attraction for the reading public in its charming simplicity, and the repetition of the many circumstances with which Addison was familiarly associated.

But if Milton simulated sorrow in his "Lycidas," Shelley has exposed himself to the same charge in his "Adonais." This elegy is the expression of exaggerated passion. As a memorial of a valued friend it is a chaplet of flowers of various hues to be thrown upon his tomb. It resembles the *immortelles*, the tangible expression of French sentiment, which deck the cemeteries of Paris. It was a double-headed arrow, for it expresses both intense sorrow and bitter sentiment. If poor Keats died of a *Quarterly Reviewer*, Shelley was his avenger in the "Adonais." Immediately after the publication of this poem, Shelley, in a letter, said, "I have dipped my pen in consuming fire for his destroyers." If a reviewer is a being susceptible of mental torture, the *Quarterly* must have winced under Shelley's biting sarcasms. But grief and anger, having spent their force, are succeeded by praise, and in the "Adonais" is a graceful eulogium on Byron, who is represented as weeping over the remains of his brother bard.

As a specimen of the elegy there is not, perhaps, a finer piece of composition in the English language than the "Adonais." It differs from the "Lycidas" in not affecting the pastoral character. Its versification is beautiful, a quality in which it also differs from Milton's elegy. Nor is its geniality with the taste of the age in which it was written without its attractions. The most subjective of poets, this quality of Shelley's mind pervades the whole of his elegy. The "Adonais" bears the impress of its author's pure and loving nature, "that always thought better of mankind than it deserved." Free from the besetting sin of authors, the jealousy of authorship, endowed with an exquisite sensibility, and warmly appreciative of the literary merits of both friends and rivals, he naturally undertook the defence of the literary reputation of his friend Keats, and he meditated an essay on the beauties and merits of the poems which had been so ruthlessly criticized. The desire of perpetuating his friend's memory may, we feel assured, have prompted the writing of this elegy; but certainly real grief little influenced its composition. The vanity of authorship and the love of fame had something to do with it, for the cloven foot peeps out in some letters written by him at this period. To Leigh Hunt he writes, "Before this you will have seen 'Adonais,' Lord Byron, I suppose from modesty, on account of his being mentioned in it, did not say a word of 'Adonais,' though he was loud in praise of 'Prometheus.'" To Mr. Smith: "I am glad you like the 'Adonais,' and particularly that you do not think it too metaphysical, which I was afraid it was." But these elegies, it is said, are the expression of simulated passion. When such exquisite poetry has been added to our literature, we should take it and be thankful, and forego all questions of the sincerity of the author's grief. Therefore the pathetic phrases, "Woe is me!" and "Weep for Adonais!" may be passed over without comment. Having regard to the occasion which prompted the writing of these elegies the poets may be said to have risen through death to an immortality of fame.

The ringing sound of the true metal is discernible throughout this poem, which is full of glowing imagery and deeply felt sentiment, expressed in the choicest language. The "Adonais" may be considered an offering to appease the manes of Keats, who, if he should fail in attaining to immortality by his own verses, shall have the memory, at least, of his kindly nature, his poetic ability, and his exquisite versification, perpetuated in this poem of Shelley.

The death-scene in the "Adonais" is a delicious painting of imagery. Hovering round the dying poet are represented desires and wishes, glimmering incarnations of hopes and fears; and—

" All that he had loved and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais."

Nature, who has not forgotten her truthful interpreter, now takes him, the poet whose song is hushed for ever, to her bosom, and they commingle; and all that was beautiful in him reappears in the gorgeous tints of flowers, and all that was melodious in the sweet song of the nightingale. Among the geniuses of unfulfilled renown there was a throne prepared for him; and Chatterton, Sydney, and Lucan, whose blossoms of promise were mown down at their budding, hail him as a kindred spirit, and welcome his advent among them. With this glimpse of a poet's Valhalla the elegy terminates. This conclusion does not, to our taste, discover an equal felicity of fancy with the conclusion of the "Lycidas;" yet, on a careful perusal of the two poems, the "Adonais" is more generally preferred.

The effect of this elegy is slightly marred by the remembrance of the doggerel verses which, it is alleged, Shelley first wrote on the death of Keats. It seems almost incredible that the pen which could so eloquently express grief, affection, fame, and friendship, could have written the mock epitaph,—

" Who killed poor Keats?
'It was I,' said the *Quarterly*,
So savage and Tartarly," &c., &c.

But Keats was past being wounded by the one or gratified by the other; and—

" After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

From these famous elegies the mind naturally turns to the next in the order of succession, the "In Memoriam" of Tennyson. In this latter poem there is a pervading circumstance from which Milton's and Shelley's are free, and which an over-critical eye might deem faulty,—that is, the constantly recurring appearance of the personality of the poet. It is a species of intrusion on the notice of the reader. But this poem has had many a loving and patient reader, to whom have been disclosed its mani-

fold beauties, and the consummate art with which it has been composed. The lamentation for so dear a friend as young Hallam necessitated such an analysis of Mr. Tennyson's own feelings and emotions that, at the first hasty perusal of the poem, his friendship would seem but another name for egotism. But on a more careful perusal, that can hardly be called a parade of self which expresses a loneliness of heart occasioned by a sudden bereavement. Death had interposed his dart between him and the pleasant companion of his walks, the genial associate of his studies. When he received intelligence that the ship bearing all that remained of his once cherished friend Hallam might be soon expected to arrive, he went down daily to the port, and thus augmented by his solicitude the pain which he had hoped to assuage. Then, with a dexterity of hand and rare felicity of language, he discovers what might have been his emotions if the friend who had spoken his last friendly word and looked his last kindly look should have suddenly stood forth on the deck amidst the passengers, and received his customary hearty greeting.

In thus depicting his bereavement the friend merges in the author, and those circumstances are artistically converted into a background which throws into bold relief the more delicate shadings of the picture. Perhaps no elegy in our language describes the inner life of man more graphically than the "In Memoriam." This poem has had the success which must ever attend the composition of a true poet, who takes man for his subject, who fairly analyzes human nature, and who gives a just estimate of man's power for good or evil.

If the length of the "In Memoriam" is to be considered a measure of the author's grief, it would seem to have been deep beyond the power of language to fathom. The "In Memoriam" is a notable instance of how a mourner may apply to himself the consoling text of the great dramatist, "Give sorrow words." So chequered is our existence with joy and sorrow, that few among us are exempt from an occasional affliction of the latter, when, if the consoling advice of Shakspeare be followed, the heart will feel lighter, and the gloom that had oppressed the mind shall be gradually dispelled. It is to be hoped, as Mr. Tennyson penned the last line of his lengthened elegy, he experienced the efficacy of words as a panacea for grief. As if apprehensive of the charge of prolixity, he says, towards the end of the poem,—

"I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like nature, half reveal
And half conceal the soul within."

Friends who are withdrawn from our side in early youth, whilst the poetry of life is still upon us, generally leave us a rich legacy in the memory of their goodness and virtue, and die, probably, in the belief that we are better than we really are. Of such thrice-blessed persons—were

blessed in life, and are blessed in death and in memory—the poet says,—

“Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?”

Widely different in its construction and its character as the “In Memoriam” is from the “Lycidas,” it is more popular, because it appeals more to human sympathies. This is the cardinal merit of Mr. Tennyson’s poetry. What intellectual sympathy can the practical minds of the present age have with the purely imaginative minds of the age which peopled the groves, trees, and fountains with divinities? The shepherd’s life has lost its romance, and the charm of the shepherd’s lays has been rudely broken by the shrill whistle of the steam-engine.

Elegies are necessarily eulogistic; and the “In Memoriam,” being an elegy on young Hallam, it is fairly appreciative of that gentleman’s talents and virtues. A just meed of praise should be given to honour, learning, integrity, and virtue. Mr. Hallam might have aspired to the foremost rank in intellectual society; but in the “In Memoriam” the rhetoric of friendship painted for him a glorious future at the bar, in literature, and in the senate. His mental endowments were truly of a rare order, and the capacity to express his ideas gracefully and with logical sequence, and to form a just criticism on the noblest poetic productions, was united to a kind and generous heart. Could such a person fail to entwine himself in the affections of a kindred spirit, and make his loss appear irreparable? And when the poet wrote,—

“Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still,”

he had clearly in his mind the conduct of a life of which there was nothing left to him but the memory. With the minuteness of a pre-Raphaelite artist he describes many of the inner life characteristics of his lamented friend: the college career, from the gip to the honour-man; the occasional relaxation from study, and the holidays spent in the country; the friends lolling on the greensward, while some great oak or elm lent its grateful shade, and the wine cooled in yonder rippling stream; the proposed marriage, which was to have converted the friends into brothers; and the vision of pretty-faced children, that might have clung to the poet’s knees, and called him uncle,—

“But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower.”

In conclusion, the objection may again be referred to, that grief treated so discursively can neither be very deep nor very sincere. But the song

of the poet is as much impelled by inward or outward circumstances as the song of the bird. To either it may be a relief or a pleasure. Perhaps in this case it may have been a little too diffuse or a little too prolonged. But its effect has been such that persons have been heard to say they would willingly purchase such a lament by a similar fate. Without being so enthusiastic as to echo this sentiment, many persons may truly say that they know not which to admire most,—the friend whose fate was lamented by such a poet, or the poet who had such a friend to lament.

The poet, says Shelley, is the high priest of nature; the following lines have, therefore, the soothing tone of religious consolation :—

“ Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor
Ring in redress to all mankind.”

FRENCH LECTURERS.

WE English are apt to wrap ourselves in our insular prejudices, and fancy that we are the most liberal nation under the sun, or at least eastward of the Atlantic; but perhaps, were we to take more trouble to study the institutions of other countries, we might come to a different conclusion.

Of the tens of thousands of our countrymen who yearly visit Paris, none are unacquainted with the Louvre; most find their way to the Luxembourg, but many forget to visit the Hôtel de Cluni, and few even trouble to inquire which is the Collège Impérial de France.

Yet the Hôtel de Cluni is a finer Roman relic than any our island can boast; and on the site where now stands the Imperial College once stood those of Tenier, Leon, and Cambrai, which, during the Middle Ages, were the resort of students of all nations, and formed, with the Sorbonne, the nucleus of European learning. These colleges were pulled down by order of Henry IV., to make room for the new college which had been founded by Francis I., but the tumults and disasters of the succeeding reigns had prevented its erection. It is recorded of the Bearnais, that, when the lecturers complained to him that their salaries had not been paid, he answered, "I would rather stint my own table than my lecturers; M. de Rosni shall pay you." The death of this wise prince again stopped the completion of the new college, which was partially resumed during the reign of Louis XIII., and again suspended until the year 1774, when the entire edifice was rebuilt by the architect Chalgrin.

Notwithstanding the regeneration which Paris has undergone, and is still undergoing, the College of France is neither a relic nor legend of the past; there it stands, an imposing structure, too slightly, it is hoped, to be swept away by the besom of improvement, which has been less fatal to old memories on the southern side of the Seine. If it be less renowned than were its predecessors, it is only because, from the general diffusion of learning, it is now no longer the only star in the firmament of knowledge. Its usefulness is as great as ever, and during six months at least in the year three or four lectures are delivered there daily, by twenty-eight lecturers, who include many of the most talented men in France. Moreover these lectures are all free. Frenchmen of every class, foreigners, even ladies are admitted into the body of the lecture-halls, while for the latter there is also a place especially appointed close to the lecturer, where they may study science, metaphysics, belles-lettres, languages—even Chinese, Mantchou, Tartar, and Sanscrit—even more commodiously than the bearded sex. I fear we might look in vain for any place in England where the same privileges are enjoyed by the public.

It is true that, more than a year since, M. Alfred Rénan, whose "Life of Jesus" created such a sensation throughout France, was deposed from his lectureship; though, perhaps, it might be rather difficult to prove why

Unitarian principles need interfere with Hebrew roots, and why, if a man believed no more than the Jews themselves, that alone should render him a bad exponent of their laws and language. But leaving this debatable ground to theologians and controversialists, we may presume that M. Rénan's religious tenets did not interfere with his being a valuable interpreter of Roman history, as the Emperor availed himself of his services, as well as those of others, to supply the historical part of his great work of "Julius Cæsar," of which the political part alone is said to be written by Napoleon.

Let us now turn to the present lecturers, among whom MM. Adolphe Franck, Philarète Chasles, and Laboulaye are deservedly popular. M. Franck lectures this year on the rights of nature and of nations. Last year M. Philarète Chasles made a series of interesting comparisons between the works of Latin and Teutonic writers during the last fifteen years, grouping them according to the influence they exerted over literature in their own and foreign countries.

This year he has lectured principally on works relating to arts and sciences, and has especially dwelt on the lives of painters, sculptors, architects, and composers. Two of his lectures were devoted to tracing the birth and progress of music in Europe, from the earliest ages down to the present time. • He affirms that for a long time discords existed only in secular music, while the plain chant continued to be exclusively ecclesiastical until the church also appropriated the impassioned and varied style, as in the "Stabat Mater" of Rossini and Cherubini's greatest works. In Glück and Mozart unity and tranquillity give place to emotion and variety, and this change is still farther carried out in the works of Beethoven and Weber. More than any other art or science, M. Chasles assumes music to be essentially instructive and spontaneous, emanating, like genius, from the soul, and revealing itself long before the reasoning powers have reached maturity. In confirmation of this opinion he quotes the well-known fact that Mozart composed symphonies while yet a child, and Rossini, Weber, and Cherubini were masters of their art at a very early age. It is probably this idea which made Goethe call music demoniacal, in the Greek acceptance of the word, as being something beyond human reasoning and analysis; in one word, an inspiration.

M. Philarète Chasles describes painting and sculpture as requiring the same genius as music, with a greater amount of patience and study. He analyzes the physical affinity between light and heat, light and colour, colour and sound, and affirms that from solar influences proceed all the modifications of the sister arts. He considers that the line of beauty is to sculpture and painting what melody is to musical compositions, while colour corresponds to harmony. In obedience to the laws of progress, that painting has followed the philosophical tendency of the nineteenth century, while music has faithfully reflected its sentiments and passions. Glück, Diderot, and Grétri being the scholars or fellow-labourers of Jean

Jacques Rousseau, while Vien and David, followed later by Horace Vernet and Paul de la Roche, were the pupils of the Revolution; while the soft, formal, porcelain beauties of Watteau were well suited to the effeminate taste of the Regency.

This theory is ingenious if not convincing.

Among the lives of composers M. Chasles dwells especially on Beethoven, Glück, and Mendelssohn, and gives an interesting account of the Memoirs of the latter, lately published in German, which affords a pleasing insight into his thought and feelings; relating passages of his every-day life, how that, though a Protestant, he was so much moved by the chanting of the "Miserere," during Passion Week, at St. Peter's at Rome, that he could not refrain from tears, and hid himself behind a ladder to conceal his emotion; how he was oppressed by the feverish gaiety and excitement of Paris, and gladly left the city, though the Parisians had done their best to *fête* and welcome him. The strong affection and deep sympathy which existed between Mendelssohn and his father is a most pleasing trait; the composer whom M. Chasles characterizes as being less cold than Spohr, less tempestuous than Beethoven, less inventive than Mozart, yet possessing, in perhaps a greater degree than any of them, a refined and powerful mind.

M. Philarète Chasles is rather eccentric in manner, dress, and appearance; generally looks as if he had been suddenly roused from deep abstraction, and might easily fall back into the same condition. He often indulges in pretty compliments to the ladies who attend his lectures.

M. Laboulaye is the author of several philosophical and political works, and of a very amusing book called "Paris in America," which has already reached a thirteenth edition. It is a piquant but good-natured satire on French, or rather Parisian prejudices and peculiarities, contrasted with American notions of freedom and progress.

M. Laboulaye is a stanch reformer and a strong advocate for universal suffrage, including even women and children. His notion is, that as a married man with a family has a larger stake in his country than a single man who has no one dependent on him, therefore he has a right to greater influence in the State. Also, that a widow, who inherits her husband's property, with all its cares and responsibilities, has as just a right to a vote as the men in her employ. Of course, in France every man who has registered his name, and taken his chance of being drawn for a soldier, has a right to vote for his representative in the senate.

But the time for the innovations has not yet arrived even in polite France; so that once last year, when M. Laboulaye broached these new doctrines, they were received with loud disapprobation, which seemed only to amuse the lecturer—not in the slightest degree to disconcert him, judging by the quiet little laugh in which he indulged. Another notion of M. Laboulaye, which does not militate so strongly against ancient prejudices, is, that as in France it often happens that one member is

voted for in several places, he should have the advantage of all the votes to secure his seat in the chambers.

Last year M. Laboulaye lectured on English law, especially of the criminal code, of which he spoke in the highest terms. For the detection of crime he considers the English police as superior to the French as they are inferior to them in bringing to light political offences. This may probably arise from want of habit, as, luckily for us, political persecutions rarely take place in England.

This year M. Laboulaye has lectured on legislation under Louis XVI., and, in his opinion, freedom in France has not made great advances since that time. He even went so far as to say, more tersely than elegantly, "Nous couchons dans le lit de Louis Quatorze," alluding to the great bed at Versailles, "sans même changer de draps."

In his little work of "Paris in America" M. Laboulaye describes himself as a Doctor Lefevre, with half a dozen titles at least, and a wife and grown-up son and daughter, who suddenly, through spiritual agency, finds himself transported into an American home, where the American Madame Lefevre thinks less of fashion and more of her husband's comfort than her Parisian prototype; his daughter, greatly to his surprise, goes out alone with a young gentleman, and actually accepts him for her husband without asking her father's consent; his son, a youth of sixteen, seeing his father is rather at a loss what to say, gets up at a political meeting, and makes a speech without the slightest hesitation. The young fellow is already anxious to do for himself, and make his own way in the world; while the son he left in Paris, except in the one item of extravagance, in which his mother encourages him, is quite contented to remain still under the parental wing. Two thorough American go-ahead editors are introduced, whose kaleidoscopic changes of views and principles perfectly bewilder the poor doctor; and a pettifogging lawyer, who excites his anger and contempt; also a negro, Sambo, who thinks his mission is to bask in the sun; and an American help, who calls her young mistress by her Christian name, and, contrary to all French servant etiquette, never sirs her master. When, at last, Dr. Lefevre is spirited back to his Parisian home, a *gendarme* wakes him unpleasantly from his dreams of freedom and independence, insisting, according to the Draco code, that the smallest crimes, even chattering, deserve death. His wife and family are so shocked at the change that has come over him, that medical aid is thought necessary, and the doctor, his own intimate friend, sends him to a lunatic asylum.

Thus end the adventures of poor Dr. Lefevre.

M. Laboulaye is a mild, pleasant-looking man, with a very intelligent expression, and stooping figure. His voice is agreeable, and while lecturing he scarcely raises it above the tone of ordinary conversation. He pronounces very distinctly, but rarely uses any gesticulation. His manner is very quiet and unobtrusive. He slips into his seat without

even a bend towards his hearers, and retires from it almost before they are aware he has finished.

While most lecturers in England place themselves at a desk or pulpit, where their only chance of seeing their audience, or being seen by them, is by standing, and from thence they deliver their lectures, usually with as little freedom of action as a Jack-in-a-box, the lecturers at the Imperial College sit at their ease in a comfortable arm-chair, placed on a low rostrum; and as the seats in the auditorium are raised, rows above rows, on an inclined plane, the lecturer can be seen and heard without difficulty.

Another great distinction between English and French lecturers is that the former almost always read their lectures—the latter never.

Whether it arises from English *mauvaise honte*, or other physical or metaphysical peculiarity, our clergymen and lecturers almost invariably arm themselves with a book; and though it might perhaps be argued that a written discourse is likely to be better arranged and digested than one delivered extempore, yet it must be owned that with the general hearers the power of engrossing and riveting the attention rests almost exclusively with the latter; and that is of course the most important point gained.

It is so customary at the Imperial College for the audience to do the writing part, that one lecturer usually begins with—

“Write, gentlemen, if you please.”

Taking into consideration the love of display with which we generally accredit our neighbours, and their known habit of forming impromptu *tableaux vivans*, even when their affections are concerned, though this is much on the decline, it seems extraordinary that their lecturers and some of their preachers—Père Felix, for instance—should adopt a style of speaking essentially simple and unobtrusive.

In his Lenten discourses at Notre Dame, in Paris, Père Felix addressed his auditory always as “gentlemen,” not “my brethren,” which sounded strangely from the pulpit.

The point to which I would revert in conclusion is, that though no doubt we enjoy liberty of the press and other boons of freedom to a greater extent than our neighbours, we might still with advantage copy their liberality of spirit, which even in former times, when despotism reigned supreme, caused them to open the floodgates of knowledge indiscriminately to all, without distinction of age, sex, or rank; and I would also add, that in the present day of imperial government it argues well for liberality of feeling when a decided republican like M. Laboulaye, who boldly states his principles even in the lecture-hall, should be appointed and paid to expound and commend English and American laws and institutions.

NARCISETTO.

I.

ON the afternoon of the 22nd of December, 186—, a stylish cab, driven by a young gentleman, drew up at the gate of "The Limes."

The cold was of that ferocious kind which devours most men's good humour, and makes their faces appear ugly and ridiculous, painting their lips indigo, and with icy flame scorching into redness every feature where red ought not to be. But the young gentleman in question appeared to advantage amidst frost and east wind; nor did it seem that his temper suffered any more than his outer man. His large green-grey eyes shone with a wild unirritated lustre, like studs of gleaming aquamarine. His cheeks were deeply coloured just on the right spot; his lips appeared of a crimson exactly strong enough to set off his even white teeth to best advantage, and wore a smile which told of inward content.

The small tiger alighted, rang, and stationed himself under the tall iron-grey's nose. The iron-grey jingled his silver bells, fluttered his blue ribbons, pawed the ground with pompous self-appreciation.

Half a minute more, and Narcisetto descended from his cab, showing a brief, tight figure, well-built and comfortable, made up with just carbon enough to keep the inner fire cheerfully aglow; showing too a perfect *toilette*—boots, gloves, and all the tests unimpeachable.

Narcisetto's errand to the Limes, be it known, was important; but as he walked the short paved pathway to the door, he looked comfortable—almost careless.

He was shown into the drawing-room, which was pretty but not pretentious, full of proofs that the arranger owned good taste, if not great means. After the youth had waited as it seemed to him twenty minutes, actually three, the door opened, and a lady entered.

The lady of the house—Mrs. Arlingford, widow of the late Captain Arlingford (lost at sea two years back in his pretty clipper-built *Sea Spray*, homeward bound from Hong Kong). She was beautiful. She might be forty, but there was no silver amongst the gold of her plain braided hair, no wrinkle on her blonde face. Weeds had just now given place to modified mourning, which became her well.

Did she slightly change colour, give just a nameless hint of inward disquietude as she entered? Her visitor thought so, and wondered. But he could not reason on the subject, being a trifle flustered himself. His heart had shied, and now bolted off in a manner almost alarming.

And no wonder. For Narcisetto was come to the Limes, as we have said, on an important matter. He was come, in fact, to make an offer.

But the cardiacal hack soon fell again into his usual amble. Narcisetto's being was wont to flow on smooth as a stream of glycerine, and

nothing could give turbulence to the soft easy current for any length of time.

The conversation remained for a while comfortably general and vague. But through it all, perhaps, both speakers were conscious that this kind of thing could not last. Madame seemed, with her great deep eyes, to dive below the surface stratum of the good-humoured boyish talk. Her face—and her companion knew it—was a perpetual note of interrogation. For his part, Narcisetto grew mildly puzzled. There was that in my lady's manner which showed (as his quick intelligence taught him) that she not only scented out the true object of his visit, but that her scent, for some reason or other, was preternaturally keen on the subject.

How it came about that the conversational breeze veered from the quarter of light literature and other generalities to that of love, we do not know. The change was accomplished.

Its effect upon Mrs. Arlingford was remarkable. Her head sank gradually back upon the crimson chair on which she sat. Her words grew fewer and fewer; her features—fine Grecian features they were—became paler, more statuesque each moment; till at last, when she heard in plain but pretty English the announcement which a strange prescience had all along told her was at hand, when she knew positively that Mr. Harry Beresford was in love with her daughter Lucy, and that he asked leave to make known his attachment to the young lady herself, she seemed on the verge of fainting.

Now that Mr. Harry Beresford, sole son of a wealthy country squire, was a good match or catch for Lucy, Mrs. Arlingford knew well. But—

The cause of, and what hung upon this “but,” will be placed before the reader in these pages.

We will not undertake to say how far Narcisetto was really enamoured of Lucy at this time. To what extent a good-natured young gentleman, who is deeply in love with himself, may be capable of passionate attachment to another, we are not able to decide. It is certain, however, that Harry Beresford wished to marry Lucy Arlingford, and that he expected to succeed with his suit.

He was therefore surprised and disappointed at Mrs. Arlingford's reception of his declaration. The manner of that lady, in fact, became extremely embarrassing, and evinced a nervous excitement quite unintelligible to her visitor. It was plain that she struggled to repress her agitation, but her efforts were painfully unsuccessful. There was a mixture of severity and of gentle chiding in her disjointed remarks. She did not refuse, she would not assent to, an interview with her daughter. She smiled sarcastically, then wept. She rose and re-seated herself repeatedly.

Meanwhile, Mr. Harry Beresford gazed upon the beautiful lady before him with a childish surprise which would have been supremely entertaining

to any third person. He wondered whether he had been a fool; strove hard to be, at any rate, perfectly gentlemanly; stole glances at his shapely boyship in the mirror, and puzzled himself as to what could be the objection to him; wishing heartily at last that he were safely out in the frosty air behind his iron-grey, rolling on the open road, to the music of silver bells. Love and ladies, he concluded, might go to the antipodes, if they were to be so unintelligible as this.

A glass door led from the room to a conservatory, which door was covered, this cold weather, by a thick crimson curtain. Presently the lady gently and warily moved the curtain aside, motioning to her visitor, as she did so, to look through.

Nothing could be more puzzlingly dramatic than this gesture. Narcisetto immediately thought of the vision displayed to Faust, and irreverently said to himself, "What can this fair Mephistopheles have to show me?"

But a glance into the conservatory made plain the lady's meaning. The vision was clearly intended to disenchant, not to enamour, like that shown to Faust.

The conservatory was long, and well clothed with foliage. At its further end, near the outer door, stood Lucy Arlingford, but she was not alone. A tall dummy, the cut of whose clothes and the length of whose whiskers were equally marvellous, was at her side. Her face was turned from the drawing-room; she did not know, therefore, that they were observed. Her knight, also, appeared too intent upon his suit to notice it either.

Lucy's tall figure was planted firmly; but her head was bent down, and a glossy loop of raven hair, resting upon a neck like snow, was all that Harry could see of the neighbourhood of her sweet face. There was no divining her state of feeling from this point of view, but Narcisetto readily accepted the interpretation of the scene which he saw that he was intended to put upon it. He coloured slightly, and turned away.

"I see," he said, with well-bred considerateness in his tone, "I have distressed you, Mrs. Arlingford, by making a proposal to which you cannot assent. I am too late in the field, that is the truth. I hope that you will forgive my ignorance and blunder, and that the fortunate gentleman there—Mr. Adolphus Churchill, I see—is worthier of the prize than I. I shall try to behave properly, and get over this. Will you be my friend still?"

"I will indeed—always."

The youth started at the earnestness with which this was said. Mrs. Arlingford gave him her hand—it trembled, he observed,—and he left her.

The jingle, tramp, and roll of Narcisetto's cab had scarcely died away, when Mrs. Arlingford, losing more completely than before her wonted womanly calm, flung herself into a chair, and burst into violent sobbing.

II.

But a few minutes had passed, when the crimson curtain was again drawn aside, and Lucy entered the drawing-room, her vivid face beautifully burning with the fire of some evidently strong emotion.

"Oh, mamma dear!" she exclaimed, not at first noticing her mother's own distress, "how *could* you leave me there? I thought it cruel—*cruel*. But you have had visitors. Who has been? That foolish Mr. Churchill is gone now, thank Heaven,—gone for good, as I trust. Oh, mother, it won't do! I can never consent. He is an unreality—a sham. I will not, cannot love a dandy, a mere 'clothes-wearing man,' as Carlyle would say."

She knelt by her mother's side as she concluded, and now for the first time saw that Mrs. Arlingford was crying, and that her cheeks were ashy pale.

"Why, mother!" she exclaimed, "what's the matter? Tell me. How cold you are! What has happened?"

"Nothing—nothing," said the mother, rising. "So, Lucy, you have dismissed Mr. Churchill? Well, it is your own business."

"But surely, mamma," said Lucy, throwing off her hat, and displaying a proud plaited coronet of hair in its place, "you would not, could not wish it! Are you crying about this? It is unreasonable—wrong. I will *not* be forced to marry. I will marry whom I please."

She drew herself up; her brown eyes flashed, her brunette cheek flushed scarlet.

"I do not intend to force you," said mamma, coolly. "We will drop the subject, Lucy. You had better go now."

"I *will* go, mamma; and you shall not see me again till this matter is settled for ever. I will write him such a letter between this and dinner as he will not forget to his dying day!"

So speaking, Lucy quickly left the room, and running upstairs to her own chamber, locked herself in, and began to cry vehemently.

Those two ladies felt miserably unhappy after their sudden little quarrel. Each accused herself, and longed to "make it up" and kiss the other. Lucy wondered whether, after all, it were not her duty to listen to Adolphus Churchill, dandy though he was. Poor mamma's self-reproach was stronger, because better founded.

But there was pride in both hearts, and each lady chose for the time being to be miserable, rather than to say a few soft compromising words. Lucy was still determined to write the threatened letter. She went to her desk, and hastily penned this note:—

"*The Times*, Dec. 22.

"SIR,

"When, a month ago, you made me an offer of marriage, I told you, in a manner which you ought to have considered final, that I could

never be your wife. You had not the courtesy, however, to accept my 'No,' but have continued to tease me ever since, and have this afternoon again inflicted upon me the annoyance of an interview. Such an annoyance, I am determined, shall not be repeated.

"Since you will not take any gentler hint, I beg now plainly to tell you that I am already in love. If this be an unwomanly avowal, upon you rests the shame, for having provoked it.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"LUCY ARLINGFORD."

There was dash and spirit in this, Lucy thought, and those were qualities she loved. She folded and sealed the note, then ran down with it to the kitchen, and finding there the little garden boy, she despatched her missive by him to Adolphus Churchill, Esquire, Beechwood Court, and returned to her room.

She now felt sorry and unhappy, thought that it was the most wretched thing on earth to have a misunderstanding with your poor dear mamma; feared nervously that her mother might perhaps die that night, and leave her in hopeless remorse at having been unkind the last thing; resolved finally that she would go presently and have a complete "make up."

But somehow the "make up" did not come off. Mother and daughter met at dinner in coldness and constraint. "They stood apart, the scars remaining." The evening passed in the same way. Music, which both loved, could not bridge over the ugly chasm. Both wondered whether they were to part for the night without a reconciliation. Each sighed in the hope of softening the other's heart, but neither would own her heart softened.

The bed time came. There was but a single icy kiss; no warm embrace, no "God bless you, my darling," or "God bless my mother." And so they went to separate rooms—for by a tacit understanding they had agreed not to sleep together to-night, as they often did.

It was long before Lucy closed her eyes; she fell thinking of the real cause (as far as she knew it) of this unpleasantness. It was this,—she loved Harry Beresford. Narcisetto—she had herself given him the title—had possessed himself of her heart's key. Narcisetto, with his easy, well-bred manners; his clear, sunny intelligence; his bright, boyish good looks; his golden curls, and large, true baby eyes! He was self-centred, something whispered; he was a trifle of a "dandy," too, as well as Mr. Adolphus! She *loved* him, nevertheless. But for this fact she would have said "Yes" to "Adolphus," or anybody else, to please her mother. While this was true, she would not for the world.

Then followed a deep woman's resolve to love Harry with whole heart and soul to life's last day. No one should know it; but this love should be the grand secret reality of her existence. Lucy had determined so far when she fell asleep.

She awoke in confusion and terror. A sound, piercing and pro-

longed, had travelled to her from her mother's room. She started to the floor. There was another cry,—her own name was pronounced.

In the darkness the furniture all seemed out of place to the frightened girl,—the distances all wrong. She struck a light at last, and, with little bare feet, ran, half paralyzed with terror, to her mother's room.

She expected to find blood and death when she got there. But as the light of her candle fell upon her mother's bed, she saw that her fears had run on in advance of the truth. Mrs. Arlingford was sitting upright, looking pale and bewildered, to be sure, but nothing worse. She had evidently undergone some severe fright.

"Dearest mother, what is it?" cried Lucy.

"Oh, my child, come and kiss me, and don't leave me again. Such a horrible, horrible dream I have dreamt, Lucy."

"Mother, it is nothing. We have had a misunderstanding to-day, and that has made us both wretched. But it is all over now. I will stay with you, and you will sleep calmly."

"Oh, but, Lucy, I *must* tell you. I thought my wicked heart was full of jealousy and vengeance towards *you*, my only darling daughter. I thought a strange horrid passion seized me, and I felt that I must take your life. And I *did*—oh, Lucy, I did! I saw the blood, and I heard your last faint groan."

The girl embraced her mother soothingly.

"It must have been dreadful for you, dearest mamma," she said. "But never mind now; be calm. It was nothing but an empty, unmeaning dream. This will be a lesson to me not to say anything to grieve you again. God soothe and comfort you."

Lucy observed, with relief and thankfulness, that her mother now wept. She did not try to restrain these tears, but only gently kissed the dear wet cheeks, and as the sobbing became less convulsive, laid the head upon its pillow, and stroked that pretty, broad, fair forehead.

"Oh, my child!" said Mrs. Arlingford, presently, "I never felt the want of your dear father as I have done this afternoon. If he were but here! If the cruel sea would but give him up alive! I cannot tell *you*, my child,—but if I could lay my head on *his* bosom, all my pain would melt away to nothing."

How could Lucy help crying now? Her tears fell silently but long, and they were sad yet healthy ones. At length mother and daughter sank alike into deep and calm sleep, and did not wake until the late winter morning looked in through the frosted pane, and familiar sounds of household life banished into the realm of "airy nothings" the night's strange terror and tears.

III.

The note which Lucy had written to the "rejected clothes-wearing man" had met with a remarkable adventure. Little garden boy, speeding with it to Beechwood Court, had fallen in by the way with farmer Butterfield's bull, which animal was in the habit of going, morning and evening, with his ladies "to be milked," *via* the Beechwood Road. Garden boy, having an excusable dread of being "tossed," had taken sudden alarm at supposed hostile demonstrations on the part of his taurine majesty, and had made a quick disorderly retreat from the highway through a hedge. In the course of his rapid "strategic" movement, the note had been dropped, and the growing dusk had prevented its recovery. The boy, however, had maintained a prudent silence on the subject.

Next day, at about noon, Narcisetto's cab came gaily along that Beechwood Road. The young gentleman, to all appearance, had borne yesterday's rebuff well, for he looked just as smiling, comfortable, and ornamental as ever. Not a single indication was to be detected that his moral coat had been stroked the wrong way. He was now driving with characteristic amiability and content to the house of a neighbouring squire, on some mission of inquiry, at the request of his calm, patrician mamma.

At a certain point on the road Master Tiger was ordered down to adjust the curb-chain. During the pause, the aquamarine eyes fell upon something by the wayside which looked like an unopened note.

In a few moments the envelope, addressed in Lucy's writing to Mr. Churchill, was in Narcisetto's hands. He winced slightly, fancying he had really liked Lucy very much indeed, lifted his wide eyebrows, and then drove on. There was only one thing to be done, of course,—he must deliver the note himself. But even *his* steady-going temper plunged at the notion of his "coming Mercury" between Lucy and his rival; for, as the reader will understand, he little guessed what was the true tenor of the communication.

The silver bells jingled up towards the lodge of Beechwood Court. As Narcisetto came near to the sacred portal, he observed emerging therefrom a coat, waistcoat, scarf, and other clothes, on the top of which appeared the semblance of a human countenance, decked with long appendages of hair. The clothes, mask, and hair combined, constituted Adolphus Churchill, Esquire.

"How d'ye do, Churchill?" said Narcisetto, in his quick, bright tones. "I've met with something that belongs to you. I suppose it was accidentally dropped. It has the look of having been out of doors all night."

"Thanks," said Sir Dandy. "What can it be?"

During the solution of this question Narcisetto moved off.

He executed his commission, drove home, and feeling just a trifle disturbed, went to his smoking-room for solace. He took a cheroot and a magazine, and stretched himself on a couch by the fire.

But he was soon aroused. There came a knock at the door, and he was told that Mr. Adolphus Churchill wished to see him directly.

In some surprise Harry directed that the visitor might be shown into the room where he was. On his entrance Mr. Churchill gave evidence of serious disquietude. He appeared, in fact, to be labouring under an oppressive burden of wrath. But anything more pitifully undignified than the exhibition of his anger could not be conceived.

Harry looked at him first in wonder; then broke out into a hearty, but not ill-natured laugh. "Why, what on earth disturbs you, old fellow?" he inquired.

"You are a snob," said Churchill, "to insult me in this manner."

Harry rose and laid down his cheroot, opened his eyes, stirred the fire, and, restraining his strong impulse to respond by a purely physical demonstration, said quietly,—

"Come, explain. I don't understand these words at all."

"Ha! And to what limit then, Beresford, do you expect my patience to extend?" replied Churchill, a suspicion crossing his mind for the first time that he was in the wrong box. "You don't mean to deny that you knew the contents of the note you brought me just now?"

"It strikes me I won't trouble myself to deny anything," said Harry, quite cool.

If Churchill had happened to be anything else but the arrant ass he was, he would here have drawn in his horns, acknowledged his blunder, and patched up an understanding with his good-tempered neighbour and college friend, Harry Beresford. But the donkey element in his nature was so large that he was unable rightly to estimate his situation. He retained, probably to his dying day, the belief that the note ignorantly handed to him in pure courtesy was virtually the offspring of the innocent bearer's brain. And Harry was far too proud to make any attempt at obliterating such a belief.

"You are dealing falsely with me," continued the enlightened young dandy; "you fancy that I have no discernment, and that you may impose upon me; no spirit, and that you may insult me with impunity. But you are mistaken. You shall pay for your impertinence."

Harry quietly rang the bell; then relighted his cheroot, and sat down perfectly silent. When the footman opened the door, he said, composedly, "Show this gentleman out, if you please.—I hope, Churchill, you will see before long that you have been making a fool of yourself. If you wish to ask me any question, and will do so by letter in civil terms, I will reply to it. At present I think we had better part."

Even now any man of common intelligence might have escaped from the fix that Churchill was in. But he had not the wit to extricate

himself. He had, however, just sufficient sense to perceive that if he stayed where he was he would probably get a good thrashing in two minutes. So he withdrew, saying, "You will hear of this again. You do not deceive me, though you fancy it."

What particular object Mr. Churchill had gained by this dignified visit we cannot say. His love had just natural instinct enough about it to lead him to suspect the right person of being the rival to whom Lucy referred in her note, and this suspicion alone had brought about his purposeless intrusion. Narcissetto himself, however, had certainly acquired something. He had learnt indirectly that Lucy's feeling towards Churchill could not have been such as he had been led to suppose.

His heart fastened with strange persistency upon the truth evolved from the late visit,—that Lucy was still free. And lying on his back, the sofa drawn near to the cosy fire, his cheroot sending through his whole frame a soft, comforting calm, Master Narcissus pondered long, rolling his bright aquamarine eyes about the ceiling, till at last the eyes closed, the cheroot fell, and there came a fast sleep and a vivid dream.

That dream, which amidst some confusion was the pleasantest that the dreamer had ever experienced, was rudely disturbed by the butler, who suddenly appeared, stirring the fire, and saying that dinner would be served in ten minutes.

IV.

That same afternoon Mrs. Arlingford, full of distracting thoughts, went to her own room for the sake of solitude. She locked the door, sank into a chair, and hid her face in her white hands.

"A mother," she thought, "a woman of forty years, a *widow*,—the helpless victim of a foolish passion for a boy scarcely half her own age."

She would have sunk into the ground with shame, had she been compelled to make the avowal to any fellow-creature. She blushed scarlet on confessing the truth even to herself. And yet it was only too true that a morbid, unworthy love had risen in her heart for the very man who had wished to marry her daughter.

But worse,—she had rejected the young man's suit for her own sake. In act, if not in word, she had made a representation to Beresford which was not true, that she might divert his affection from her daughter. She had created a false impression in his mind, while she had encouraged Lucy's acceptance of Churchill's offer, knowing that the girl loved another,—the one *she* loved.

How base, how unnatural, how unwomanly her conduct seemed! How she doubted of her poor frail heart, wondering whereunto this unruly affection might grow! How she strove with herself, setting before her harassed mind every consideration which might tend to deliver her from the horrid thralldom.

Oh! if *he* could only come back, her one *true* love and hero! How the sight of his sun-face would dispel this unwholesome mist, and lay the ghost of the foolish, uncanny passion! But he was silent for ever in his "vast and wandering grave." Alas, alas for him!

Anon the *ignis fatuus* of her new wild love would spring up again athwart the lady's holier thoughts. Then she would look in the glass to satisfy herself that beauty was still left to her, measuring her chances of success with that dear fascinating boy! Then she would wish herself a girl again, with curls of flowing gold, and jewel eyes, and lips of coral, walking by his side, admired and loved by him before all others.

Again, with a start, she would wake from the degrading dream—hating, despising herself; and yearning over darling Lucy, her precious lost husband's child, she would resolve, God helping her, never to let a soul guess the real state of her sad, distracted heart.

It was a weary, miserable struggle. We cannot closely follow the windings of those tangled thoughts, or minutely anatomize that morbid soul. Certain it is, however, that when Lucy came, late in the afternoon, to ask for a solution of her mother's long self-banishment from the drawing-room, Mrs. Arlingford's impetuous thoughts had hurried her to a goal, the true and dreadful nature of which she scarcely realized.

At the moment the gentle rap at the door sounded, Mrs. Arlingford held in her hand a small phial. It contained a narcotic, familiar in most households, and often thankfully taken by the restless and suffering, in small doses. But the lady had now taken up the drug with feelings far different from those with which she had ever done so before.

"Why not," she had thought, "end the wretched conflict in a sleep? Better to die than to live so as to degrade one's self. None would know. Lucy would only be the better off for my death."

In the midst of these thoughts the mother replied to her daughter that she would come down-stairs shortly. She scarcely knew what she said, and certainly at the moment did not mean to keep the promise she made.

But the phial proved to be empty. Presently, therefore, Mrs. Arlingford *did* leave her room, but not until she had written a note to a chemist at Gaisford, a town two miles off; which note, upon going down-stairs, she left in the kitchen to be sent by the old errand-woman next day.

This evening passed almost as sadly as the last. The mother was sometimes absent, sometimes irritable and excited. Lucy began to be seriously apprehensive about her, but she did not express her fears.

Next day was Christmas eve. The dear old season came venerably in, bearded with icicles and snow. As Lucy rose, she thought, sadly, that this did not promise to be a cheerful Christmas for her. Her love, as far as she knew, was unrequited. Her mother's state was inexplicably sad and alarming. No; the old man brought for her, she fancied, no pleasant gifts this year.

But as cheerfully as she could she went through the time-honoured Christmas forms; prepared, or overlooked the preparation of, little comforts for the poor; wove natty decorations of holly, mistletoe, and ivy; and every now and then would come smilingly to her pale mother's side, who sat alone, strange, gloomy, and abstracted.

"We should not be dining by ourselves to-day, mamma," said Lucy, as the hour for the meal approached. "Even two years ago, amidst all our sorrow, some one was with us on Christmas eve."

The mother scarcely noticed the remark.

"Has the errand-woman brought anything for me?" she inquired of a servant, who entered at the moment with candles.

"Nothing, ma'am. She passed half an hour back."

"What did my mother expect?" asked Lucy. "Had she ordered herself some little Christmas present?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Arlingford, covering her pale face.

At this point a ring was heard at the front gate. Immediately after the admission of the ringer to the house, the servant came to the drawing-room door. Her face was unusually flushed and excited as she said, "Some one from Mr. Arnold's, the chemist's, ma'am. He wishes to see you himself."

Mrs. Arlingford swept into the hall with her usual calm dignity, and observed, at the open front door, the figure of a tall large man, muffled in winter wraps, his black eyes bent eagerly upon her.

"What is it?" she asked, hardly able to see the stranger's face distinctly.

"It is only *this*," said a full bass voice, "that your errand-woman forgot, a small packet from the chemist's. I accidentally learnt her omission, and, as I was coming this way, undertook to supply it. Here is your physic."

Something in the speaker's tone had arrested Mrs. Arlingford's attention. She turned a searching glance upon him, clasped her hands, uttered an indescribable cry of joy, and ran forward to his arms.

Heaven! it was her long-lost sailor! It was the husband whose reported death she had mourned for two weary years!

She fell, weak and trembling, upon his bosom; and there fed upon his life-restoring kisses, like the dying desert traveller who meets with unhopedor luscious fruits beside his arid path; there she realized the truth that in her dire extremity God had helped her in the way just most effectual; that He had reserved this mighty happiness until the moment when it would bring with it the fullest cup of blessing.

What an evening that was! Think of it, reader. To find a two years' sorrow a fiction; to awaken all of a sudden from saddest experiences, and to learn they were but dreams! To the size of such vast joy no human words will stretch.

For a time the excitement of delight was extravagant, but an hour or

two sobered while it confirmed the bliss. When they had seen him eat, heard him explain, then they grew calmer, and rested happily content on the broad basis of unquestionable fact.

But ere long a new thought sprang up in the mother's heart. She had wronged, deeply wronged, her darling daughter. With her generous, loving soul restored, as it now was, to perfect health, she could not sleep, she knew, until that wrong had been righted.

She hastily wrote and despatched the following note:—

“*The Limes, Dec. 24.*”

“MY DEAR SIR,—Will you do me the kindness to let me have a few words with you here at once on the subject of which we spoke at our last meeting? I then misled you entirely. Pray come, if possible, directly.

“You will probably have heard of our wonderful happiness before this reaches you. I am sure you rejoice with us.

“Yours very faithfully,

“Harry Beresford, Esq.”

“MARY ARLINGFORD.”

Narcisetto lost no time in obeying this abrupt summons. He was shown privately into the dining-room, where Mrs. Arlingford first saw him alone. There was no constraint or awkwardness now. The foolish fancy had fled like a Will-o'-the-wisp from the woman's now happy heart. Her girlhood's love was restored to her, and her late passion had dwindled to a myth and a phantom. She could speak now to Harry as a mother to her son. She did not tell him of the motive which had urged her late strange conduct; but she made it clear to him as day, that no obstacle now lay between him and Lucy.

It was not unreasonable that he should ask for an interview with the young lady then and there. He asked and obtained it.

She came to him in a glow of girlish beauty. Her mourning had been hastily set aside, and she swept into the room in a dress of queenly purple, with a diamond lustre in her eyes, and berries peering bright from amidst her hair, which seemed a-fire with them.

He did not speak a word. His volubility all failed him at that strange moment. It was so new, so overpowering—this sense of total absorption into the life of another. In some nameless, inarticulate language he told her that he loved her; and she, scarcely better able to express herself, made to him the same confession.

He was unworthy of her. He knew it. He had hitherto been a self-centred, frivolous creature; but he felt that a new life was now infused into his soul—or rather, that his life was drawn into that of another. Fair Arachne had sucked his being into her own, and the old, butterfly, “Narcisetto” nature had fallen from her silken toils,—fallen clattering down to dust—an empty, shrivelled shell!

What a wonderful Christmas day followed! Lucy said that it was like the last page of the overture to “*Der Freischütz*.” It was all joy;

joy unsullied, as the snow upon the lawn; deep, as the ocean which had yielded up the long-lost *pearl*; substantial, as—turkey and sausages.

The general merriment was increased, when a report (intended to have the air of casualty, but clearly sent by design) reached the Limes, that Mr. Adolphus Churchill, of Beechwood Court, was just engaged to Miss Fenella Fotheringay—the best dresser in the county.

Of her design in ordering the “physick,” and of her late wild fancy, the now happy wife never spoke—not even to her husband. And surely she was right to be silent. Some phantoms of our foolish brains, some frailties of our poor fond hearts, are better never painted by the tongue or whispered into any human ear. The lovers, now happy in mutually avowed affection, did not care to inquire into the cause of that strangeness of manner which Mrs. Arlingford, before their engagement, had in different ways shown to them both.

Harry proved to demonstration that he could love with complete self-forgetfulness. As Lucy’s nickname for him, therefore, seems henceforth to lose its appropriateness, we think the time has come for us to close the story of “Narcisetto.”

A NIGHT IN A CAFFRE PRISON, AND HOW I CAME THERE.

At the time of the troubles with the natives at the Cape of Good Hope, in 18—, I was an ensign in the —th Regiment of Foot, and stationed, with a detachment of the regiment, at a small settlement on the immediate outskirts of the “bush,” which was at the time an exceedingly dangerous locality to venture into, on account of the insurgent Caffres, who were pretty thick there. The “station,” in which some ten or twelve settlers were located, with their families, was protected by a stockade, and otherwise fortified in the best manner the military could manage, with the means at their disposal, against any sudden attack; and all the inhabitants were careful not to remain outside after nightfall. The stock, also, of the farms was as well looked after as circumstances allowed, but nevertheless, in spite of great vigilance, a good many cattle were carried off by the marauders who prowled about, and driven into the bush. On the whole, however, we had had a pretty quiet time of it since I had come over to the place, and I began to feel the time hang heavily on my hands; the monotonous round of duties became at last a great bore to my brother officers and myself, and we began casting about for some new amusement to while away our leisure hours, which were far too many to our thinking. We were all new hands just come from England, and not very well up to the country and its ways and means, with the exception, I should say, of Major B——, who was in command of the port. The major was a grizzled old veteran, who had spent a considerable portion of his time in the country, and was a very valuable man for acting against the kind of enemy we had to deal with; truth to say, however, he was by no means a favourite among his brother officers, for he was of a sour and crabbed sort of disposition, the effects of the climate, no doubt, and seldom honoured our little gatherings with his presence; just then, however, as there seemed nothing else to be done, we determined to wait on our superior and try and get his assistance in finding some source of occupation. Luckily, the major was in an amiable mood at the time of the application, and after we had made known our wants, said, “Well, gentlemen, I think I can help you to kill some of your time; I understand none of you have been out in this confounded land of ours before; what say you, then, to a hunt after spring bucks? I understand there is a large herd of them in the plains beyond the bush over there.”

“But, Major, you forget the Caffres,” ventured to interpose one of the subs.

“D—— the Caffres!” said Major B——, huffily; “I haven’t been twenty years in the country without knowing how to manage the black rascals. You fellows just provide yourselves—that is, as many of you as

are not wanted to look after the men—with the best horses and rifles you can get, and leave the rest to me."

Without venturing on more—for our major was more than a quarter of a century older than the oldest of us, and not a lamb—we withdrew from the presence and proceeded to make our preparations for the sport, which was to take place next day. We dropped in on the civilian quarters, with the inhabitants of which we newly arrived youngsters were not very intimate at the time, and managed to borrow such matters needful in the affair as we did not already possess ourselves; some half-dozen or so of the settlers also arranged to join us, of whose company we were very glad, for, as I have already said, we were all greenhorns, and the more experienced hands we could get to go with us the better.

The day for the sport found us in high feather at the prospect of the novel sport in store for us, ready to set out, about a dozen guns in all. Our major, however, declined going with us, giving us some directions about avoiding the thicker parts of the bush, and keeping to the plains where the game was to be found. His presence was not missed, however, for he always acted on us like a damp blanket, and it was refreshing to be free from his stern eye during that part of the time we had to keep together. I was, I think, the best mounted of the party, as I had on coming to the station purchased a very pretty bit of horseflesh, the equal of which I was assured was not easy to get in the country; and certainly I was delighted with my steed, as he pranced and curveted by the side of his more sober-looking companions on our way towards the hunting-ground. It was necessary to use great circumspection in passing through the bush-wood, but the colonists were up to the proper way of getting on, and passed us safely through till we came to the extensive plains which were separated from our station by the strip of wooded country; here there was nothing further to be feared from lurking foes, for the ground was plain and level as far as the eye could reach, only broken here and there by an occasional bush or clump of trees.

Arrived here, we broke into a quiet sort of canter, to economize as much as possible the wind of our horses for the work before them, and, after dividing into three parties to have the more chance of finding the game, proceeded to scour the plain. I was with two of ours and one of the colonists, and after losing sight of our companions about an hour and a half after leaving the stockade, we came in view of a herd of spring bucks quietly browsing on the rich grass of the plain a long way off; however, a clump of trees afforded us shelter from their sharp eyes, and as the slight wind that was stirring blew toward us, we pulled up for a while before galloping down on them, the colonist giving us a few useful hints in the mean time. At last, with rifles ready in our hands, we issued from the friendly cover of the bushes and advanced towards the herd at a walk, with the object of getting as close as possible before being observed by the animals, but at the same time keeping a wary eye on them, ready to

put spurs to our steeds on the first indication that we were found out. It was not long before we were made out, in spite of the quiet way in which we endeavoured to approach, and rising one by one the whole pack began to scamper off; meantime, however, our eager horses had felt the spur and the relaxed bridle, and were after them at the top of their speed. I had now opportunity to test the qualities of my steed, and certainly did not repent my bargain in purchasing her, for in a few minutes she had left the other three a good distance behind, and was gradually increasing it; the herd proved a pretty large one, and on being disturbed broke up into several smaller divisions, so that my companions and self were soon galloping in directions which would separate us for some time. The portion to which I gave chase was soon diminished by one through whom I managed to send a bullet on getting within range, and leaving the carcass to be picked up on my return. I passed on, though at a slackened speed, for loading on horseback at a gallop was not an accomplishment in which I excelled. This sort of thing happened again and again, and I had already left several of the game to guide me back again, when, much to my disgust, my horse stumbled in an unaccountable manner and fell, pitching me over his head, just as I was in the act of taking aim at a spring buck whose range I had got; my piece went off at the same moment, but luckily without doing any damage to its owner. I was a good deal stunned, both by the suddenness of the thing, and by a hard knock on the head which I got from the barrel of my gun in coming to the ground, and it took me some minutes to recover myself, load my rifle, and mount the horse, who had of his own accord got up, not much the worse for his toss, and stood waiting for me; the game had got a good start in the mean time, however, and it would be some time before I could get back my lost ground. Determined, nevertheless, to continue the chase, I pushed on again, for I had made up my mind to have the best "bag" of the day. It was not so easy to do, however, as I thought, for it was not till after a hard gallop of an hour that I again got a chance of firing my rifle into the midst of the herd, and by that time the horse, which had evidently injured its foot by falling, though the fact was not immediately apparent, began to show signs of failing, and had I been an experienced man I should have at once given up the hunt for that day, and made the best of my way back to the rendezvous, which was already at a great distance in my rear. However, caution was not part of my nature at the time, and I continued to ply the spur, in the excitement of the moment, and had brought down several more of the animals, when the evident weariness of my poor steed became too manifest to be any longer disregarded even by me, so firing my rifle at the last spring buck, and missing him by the way, I pulled up, and slipping from the saddle, loosened the girths to give as much ease as possible to the horse. I examined the hurt foot as well as I could, but could make nothing of it, or tell what was the matter; so taking out a cigar I lighted it, and threw myself on the grass, determined

to try what rest and quiet for a while would do for both of us, and to make the best of my way back as soon as it seemed practicable to do so; for I was now thirty miles or so from the settlement, and it was getting rather late, though there was still plenty of time to get back before dusk, had it not been for the accident to my horse. To be caught in the dark in such a place would not be pleasant I knew, for I was quite ignorant of the way home, and also unprovided with the necessary materials for camping out in the bush; besides, my comrades would very likely be puzzled to think what had become of me, and might be put to great inconvenience and danger in looking me up. These things occurred to me as I puffed out the smoke of my Havanna, and enjoyed the refreshing sensation of repose after the hard jotting I had got; and turning a glance at my four-legged companion, who was browsing at a few paces distance from where I lay, I tried to make out if the half-hour's rest had done him as much good as it had done me, and then getting up approached him to ascertain the fact by actual demonstration. It turned out just the reverse, however; the foot was evidently badly sprained, and now that the blood had cooled down, it had become quite stiff and sore.

Plainly there was no use in thinking of going back, at least in that fashion, just then, and I was somewhat puzzled what to do. It was still broad daylight, but night would soon be down on me—not a cheering prospect for a man whose flannel shirt and trousers were his only protection from the weather, with the addition, perhaps, of a small rug, which was strapped before my saddle; the weather, too, was no joke at night, as I had found even in my quarters at the station. However, to make the best of the business, I took the bridle of my horse and led him towards a portion of the wooded ground, about half a mile off, which might afford us shelter from the wind, which was beginning to make itself felt. The idea of making a fire at first seemed to me a hazardous kind of proceeding in such a neighbourhood, but by-and-bye cold, and I may add hunger too—for I had neglected to provide myself with provisions before setting out on my day's expedition—overcame prudential scruples, and induced me, even at the risk of being pounced upon by any of the natives who might be lurking about in the neighbourhood, to kindle a fire in the most convenient position I could find for concealing it, and having got it alight to return to the carcass of the last spring buck I had shot, from which I cut a couple of steaks; the remainder, together with the whole of those I had brought down that day, would of course have to be left where they were, a prey very likely to any of the animals which would come forth from their lairs at nightfall to look for their supper. I myself, with a couple of tough sticks, proceeded to cook my first bush supper, and had the satisfaction of hearing my two steaks hissing in the most cheerful fashion over the fire which blazed away underneath; and while waiting the proper time for discussing them, occupied myself in looking after the horse, whom I made as comfortable as possible for the

night, which was falling with a rapidity usual in that climate, and by the time my supper was properly cooked it was already pretty dark. However, the cheerful blaze of the fire gave light enough for all purposes, and enabled me to cut the steaks in pieces with my hunting-knife, and eat them with a first-rate appetite, although it was the first time I had ever been called on to put up with such queerly cooked fare as that before me. The meal finished, I wrapped as much of myself as I could in the small piece of rug and lay down alongside the fire, on which I had heaped some fresh logs and twigs, a good many of which were lying handy about me, and fatigued as I was with the day's work, was soon in the Land of Nod. How long I slept I do not exactly know, but I was roused from my slumbers by the sharp report made by a musket, or rifle, and springing to my feet I hastily snatched up my own rifle, which I had placed ready to my hand in case of need, and looked round endeavouring to pierce the darkness which enveloped me on all sides, to discover the cause of the interruption. Nothing, however, as might be expected, could be made out, and it then occurred to me that if the shot came from lurking foes the fire would prove dangerous by guiding them to the place where I was, when I would be in a pretty fix; so hastily kicking the pile of lighted embers, which by this time were burning rather low, I managed to smother out most of them and cover the rest with brushwood; and having thus secured myself as I hoped against being surprised, I crept out, rifle in hand, to the edge of the clump of trees in which I had fixed my quarters, to see if could make anything out on the plain outside. Here there was more light than among the trees, and I could discern the dim outlines of several men, who, I had no doubt, from their appearance and presence in that locality at the time of night, were Caffres on the prowl; they were approaching in my direction, and I thought at first were about to enter among the trees where I was; however, on coming near they turned aside and proceeded in another direction, so I was easy on that score at least, and returned to where I had left the horse. The fire was again got up, but this time carefully hedged in on all sides with brushwood to obviate any chance of observation from without, and I once more tried to get to sleep, which was not hard to do, and I was again oblivious of terrestrial things.

Again, too, my slumbers were cut short, and this time in a much more startling manner, by a rude kick administered to me, which made me jump up with celerity, to find myself confronted by half a dozen black skins, of whom the fellow who had awakened me, who was the tallest of the lot, seemed to be leader. The fire, which had blazed up from some one having fed it with fuel, enabled me to see everything plainly enough. I had been found out by the black rascals through my imprudence in allowing the fire so much scope, and was now a prisoner; for my arms, I perceived, had been removed, and my rifle was held in the hands of their leader, who gave an ugly grin as he watched my stupefaction at finding all means of defence or escape gone.

"Now, captain," said he, in the jargon of the natives which they use when speaking what they mean for English, which, however, I translate, "you must come along with us."

"But where are you going to take me, and who are you?" I asked, for want of something else.

"Never mind that, you, but come on, English dog," said my friend, as he threw my rifle over his shoulder, in preparation for departure.

Submitting to my fate, I suffered my two hands to be fastened behind me, and, surrounded by my captors, proceeded through the bush in a direction which I saw with dismay led directly away from the settlement. The Caffres, to do them justice, did not offer me any insult on the way, but walked along on each side of and behind me in silence, or nearly so, as we proceeded through a dense sort of jungle, through some parts of which it took some trouble to make our way. Daylight broke, and found us still on the road, having made considerable way through the forest; and the torches which hitherto had lighted us along, were extinguished, as no longer necessary, the rays of light which already penetrated the dense foliage overhead being quite sufficient to guide us on our way through the thick shrubbery. I was awfully tired, however, by this time, my legs not being used to the hard work required from a novice in picking his way over the rough ground; and the additional fact of my hands being fastened, of course increased the difficulty of my position, as it required a great deal of watchfulness on my part to avoid running my head against the many boughs which projected over our heads. The Caffres, however, seemed quite fresh, as I perceived with despair, and, accustomed as they were to this sort of thing, appeared quite able to go on for any amount of time without fatigue, and therefore without the necessity of stopping to rest. I was a good deal relieved, then, when just getting into the last stage of exhaustion from the severity of the exercise required from me, and from sundry hard knocks which I had caught on my cranium from the boughs aforementioned, when we suddenly came to the end of the timber into a cleared space of considerable extent, in the middle part of which was located a cluster of huts, about fifty or sixty in number, the whole being surrounded by a kind of stockade, having a dry ditch in front of it all round. This I conjectured to be a Caffre village, to which no doubt my conductors belonged, and this turned out to be the case, for passing through an opening in the stockade, which represented a gateway, I found myself in the midst of the cabins, the inhabitants of which turned out in force to observe us; they were almost entirely composed of the women, children, and old men of the tribe, the others being, I conjectured, absent on some expedition (I afterwards learned that they had formed part of a band which had attacked the settlement in which I was quartered on the very night of my capture). In spite of my rueful condition I looked with some interest on this the first large gathering of the natives which I had yet seen, but cannot say I was much impressed by their appearance, which

certainly did not seem to my fastidious eyes very agreeable : they struck me as an ugly lot of niggers altogether, though among the younger women there were some graceful figures and bright eyes enough. I was not allowed, however, to feast my own eyes on the sight very long, for the big Caffre who had possessed himself of my rifle, and who, from the deference paid to him by the surrounding crowd, was apparently some important personage—a chief, no doubt—took me roughly by the shoulder with an iron gripe, and muttering something in broken English, which might have been a blessing or anything else, hauled me along towards one of the huts which stood apart from the others, and had altogether a much more substantial appearance than its neighbours. This, I suppose, was the public prison of the village, and into it I was thrust without much ceremony, and left to my reflections.

I found myself sole occupant of a moderately sized square room, the walls of which were formed of logs, the crevices between which were filled in with earth, with which material the structure was thickly coated all over on the outside; the floor was of earth; and a heap of straw, not quite new either, formed all the furniture of the place. Besides the door, which was a rather strongish affair for its kind, there were two more openings, in the shape of a pair of circular windows on each side, which let in air with a trifle of daylight.

Having taken in all these little details by a glance round my prison, I threw myself wearily on the straw, too tired and knocked up in every way to be particular about the sort of couch I had got, or the many "strange bedfellows" by whom I soon became aware it was already occupied, and began to revolve the events of the last few hours in my mind, and speculate on the fate which was most likely in store for me—death, I took it for granted, from what I had been told over at the settlement (though I dare say the stories of Caffre barbarities which had been related to me by the settlers were somewhat exaggerated), was the least thing that could happen to me, and it would be lucky if I got that without being made the sport of those barbarians by being tortured in some horrible manner previously. So jaded was I in body and spirits, that the idea of attempting to escape did not at the time occur to me as I lay in a sort of lethargy, which soon changed into a profound slumber, in the course of which I again went over in my dreams the incidents which had brought me to this pass.

I may have been asleep some hours, when I was awakened by the shake of a rough hand on my shoulder, which made me jump hastily up, imagining myself where I was in my dream,—that is, again asleep by the bush fire by which I had been surprised the other night; the intruder was a black, who had just entered by the door, through which the sun was now shining, filling the dismal chamber with light and warmth; and in his hands were an earthen jar, full of water, and a piece of coarsely baked cake, used by the natives for bread, both of which he set down beside me, making at the

same time a significant gesture with his fingers, though all he said was "Eat." I was relieved to find it was no worse, and my time had not yet come, and holding out my hands, which were already quite cramped by the pressure of the cords which bound them, said, "Now, my good fellow, just cut these, will you? I can't eat unless you do." The man's English was plainly at a discount, for he muttered sometheng in his barbaric jabber, shaking his head at the same time, to imply that he did not understand my words; however, on my repeating the gesture of holding out my manacled hands, he seemed to take it all in, and after a moment's hesitation, drew a knife from his waistband, which, with a short kilt, constituted his whole attire, and severed the cords and left my hands at liberty once more; on which, with some more words in his dialect, he left me, fastening the door securely outside. It was some time before my cramped wrists were sufficiently recovered to enable me to move them, and take a long draught from the water-jar, the food I dispensed with, as I was by no means hungry enough to enjoy it, and once more lay down on the straw, this time in much greater comfort than before. Then the thought occurred to me, "Why not make an attempt to escape?" Nothing could be lost at all events by trying the experiment, and I set myself to think on every plan which seemed to me practicable under the circumstances. Of course, to get out of my present durance was the first point to be settled; that might be done by digging a hole large enough to pass my body through under one of the walls, provided I had time, and the needful tools to set to work with; after that I should trust to my luck to see me safely through the remainder of the adventure. I had a large bladed knife in my pocket, which oddly enough, I thought, had never been rifled by my captors, and this was now taken out, and I went round the walls of my cage to ascertain which was the weakest point, and the best calculated to be begin on, a spot in the corner where my straw couch was I selected as the best for the purpose, and at once, as no time was to be lost, set to work scraping away the earth, which as fast as I cleared it out of the hollow I was making by very slow degrees, I spread evenly over the floor in a part of the room where it could not be noticed on account of the imperfect light. A heap of straw lay convenient, ready to be thrown over the aperture on the slightest evidence of an attempt to open the door of my prison, and with my ears continually on the alert, I worked with might and main to get through as much as I could while I had time. At first the work seemed easy enough, as the surface clay was soft, and easy to dig through; but by-and-bye I came on stones wedged closely together, the lifting up of which, one by one, occasioned me no small amount of trouble and labour,—so much so that after removing with much lacerating of my hands in the process one layer of stones, only to come on another underneath, I almost despaired of being able to get out that way. I had made a pause to get some breath, when I heard the sound of some one unfastening the door outside, whose approach

I had not been aware of, for there was plenty of noise made outside the hut by the villagers and their small fry, and had just time to pitch the cover over my work, and throw myself at full length on it, having previously dipped my two hands into the jar of water, to get from them as much as possible the traces of what I had been about, when the door opened, and a party of some five or six natives, evidently distinguished characters, made their entrance and stood before me, while behind them a crowd of the inhabitants of the village pushed and jostled one another at the open doorway, in their anxiety to get a glimpse of what was going on inside, though none of them ventured to cross the threshold, and stand under the same roof as the chiefs. "Now for it," I said to myself, as I arose to receive my visitors, who on their part regarded me with some curiosity, and not a little satisfaction at having caught me; among them I could see the tall black who had brought me to this pass, who greeted me with a grin, while he muttered something in his execrable jargon, the meaning of which I could not make out. However, one or two of his brother chiefs could speak enough English to make themselves understood, and between them and me a conversation something like the following place:—

"What is your name?"

I gave it,—say, Thomas Davis.

"Where do you come from?" &c., &c.

To all this I gave suitable answers, and on the whole seemed likely to remain on good terms with my sable friends, at least for the present, for they did not seem disposed to show their teeth just then; but by-and-bye the conversation got on more dangerous ground, and they began to pump me for information which, if given, would put my comrades over at the settlement in some danger. It was in vain I tried to ward off the questions, some of which were on subjects of which I really knew nothing,—they would take no denial; they had plainly made up their mind that I should supply them with what they wanted, and did not intend to be balked by me. At last I fairly lost my temper at their pertinacity in plying me with the same thing over and over again, and forgetting all considerations of prudence in the heat of the moment, I swore roundly at them all, and referred them to a certain quarter for any information they might want. Luckily, they did not know enough of English to understand fully what I was saying; all they could see was that I wouldn't give them any information, and that I was angry at their asking it; and they themselves at this also laid aside their dignity, and began threatening me with all manner of pleasant things if I did not comply with their demands; at the same time going through a series of excited gesticulations, and raising their voices in their rage till they looked like madmen. I thought I had got off cheap, when the interview was closed by my being pitched on the ground and bound securely hand and foot, and thus left to meditate over the alternative given to me—namely, of giving information

of what I knew nothing about, or of being put to death in a manner very unpleasant to think of next morning. It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon, so that I had some time before me in which to act, if only I could get free of the bonds round my limbs, and after the door of my prison had again closed, I lay still for some time, till I was sure the coast was clear, and then dragged myself towards the place where the hole I had been digging was. My hands were tied behind my back, and pretty tightly too, but by patience I contrived to get the straw away so as to be able to grope about for my knife, which I had thrown down at the first indication of being disturbed. The blade was luckily open, or it might have fared badly with me, and after several ineffectual attempts I managed, by fixing the handle of the knife in the ground and rubbing the rope which confined my wrists against the blade, to free my hands. This accomplished, I made a sort of running noose of the rope, intending to slip it on my hands again in the event of my being disturbed by any one entering; the cords on my ankles being left for the same purpose until the time came when it would be necessary to remove them, in order to use my legs. Then I set to work with renewed energy on my hole, the thought of what was in store for me giving me additional vigour, and at the end of a couple of hours' work I had the satisfaction of seeing that I had got to the proper depth, and that all that now remained to be done was to work the hole in an upward direction on the other side of the wall. This would be the most difficult part of the job, and to set about it right it would be necessary that my feet should be free; so I determined to wait till dark, when there would be less danger of interference before finishing my work, and in the mean time lay down to recruit my tired limbs and discuss the hitherto despised piece of native bread that had been left with me, which was now a welcome refreshment. I had taken the precaution of slipping my wrists again into the rope, so as to appear as if still bound, and it was lucky I did so, for as the twilight began to advance, the door of my cell was opened again, and a negro carrying his spear, and wrapped in a long blanket, made his appearance and took a rapid glance in the direction where I was, to satisfy himself, I suppose, that all was right, and then retired fastening the door outside. This fellow I conjectured was posted as a sentry over me, and I was right, for immediately after I could hear him pacing up and down in front. This was an unforeseen obstacle to the progress of my plans, for the noise which I should be obliged to make in digging under the wall of my prison would in all likelihood be heard in the stillness of the night by the sharp ears of the native. However, as there seemed no other chance for me, I determined to do my best and take the risk of failure; and having freed my legs from their bonds, I proceeded with my work of boring under the heavy planks which kept me in. The earth fortunately proved soft, and less stones were mixed with it; however, I trembled every moment lest the falling of some loose earth might alarm the sentry outside, and induce him to pay me a visit—an event which of

course would ruin all my plans; it was with great relief, therefore, that on hearing the footsteps of the former seemingly going away, and getting up to ascertain the cause by climbing up to one of the holes which served me for windows, I perceived him standing wrapped in his blanket before a fire which was burning some dozen of yards away, and round which were some half-dozen more natives.

I did not stop to see what they were doing, but at once went back to my hole, and worked furiously to make the most of my time, and as there were no obstacles in my way, I had soon the satisfaction of feeling that only a slight crust of the upper earth was between me and liberty. I was just going to break through this and make off, when the sound of approaching footsteps made me desist for the moment; for although there was no moon, there was quite light enough outside for me to be distinguished by any person who might be abroad. Looking out from the loophole, I perceived, with dismay, that my custodian was close to the door with two of his friends, and evidently about to open it. Here were all my hopes rudely destroyed just at the moment when I was about to realize them. If the negro—who, by-the-bye, carried a flaming torch taken from the fire in his hand—were to perceive me unbound as I was, I was done for. My resolution was at once taken, and throwing myself on the straw in such a manner that my feet were covered, so as to hide the fact of their being *minus* the rope, I feigned sleep, determined, in the event of discovery, to jump up and make the best fight I could with the knife which I kept in one hand for the purpose. It happened as I thought; the negro popped his head in, and letting the light of the torch fall on me, remained for a moment, which seemed to me an hour, inspecting the state of affairs, but, as good luck would have it, without coming inside.

Seemingly satisfied that his charge was safe, he again locked me in, to my unspeakable relief; for I dreaded lest his sharp eyes would take notice of certain things which he could hardly help noticing if he had been wide awake. On going to the window again, and taking a look at the watchfire outside, I could see the cause of his stupidity. The negroes were drunk, and my friend had plainly partaken a little too freely of the bottle himself.

There he was outside the door, however, and so long as he remained it was almost useless to think of trying to get out, for the least noise perceived by him would be fatal to me; so I lay still, anxiously waiting for any indication which might afford me a chance. For a long time, however, I was in despair, till my patience was well-nigh exhausted, and had it gone on much longer I should have made the attempt even at the risk of instant capture; for the fellow outside, drunk though he was, seemed to have his "weather eye" open, as was evidenced by his now and then getting up from his crouching position before the door and walking round my prison. An opportunity soon presented itself, however, of which I

hastened to avail myself. As I was reconnoitring from my loophole I perceived my sentinel making towards the fire, which was nearly out by this time, and at the same time another negro advancing to meet him. They were evidently changing sentinels, I thought; and without a moment's delay I jumped into the hole, and in a moment more stood outside, my head and clothes covered with clay.

As the night was tolerably clear, and objects could be easily distinguished at some distance, I was still in great danger of being discovered; so, crouching down under the wall, I tried to make myself as small and invisible as possible, till the proper moment came to get off. I could hear the sentry coming round at the other side, and was a good deal troubled lest he should take it into his head to have a look at his prisoner. If there had been time to do so I should have got back into my cage, in anticipation of such an event. I listened with a beating heart, anxiously waiting to hear the alarm given when it was discovered that I had fled; but, to my unspeakable relief, no such thing happened, and the negro sat down, as I conjectured, without troubling himself about the necessity of too much vigilance. Now was my time; so, stealing off with as much circumspection as possible, I made towards a part of the camp where I calculated on finding the opening in the stockade, my only thought at the moment being to get out of the place as speedily as possible, without troubling my head about the measures I should be obliged to take afterwards to keep life up in the woods beyond, till by some chance I should manage to find my way home. Even this was not an easy thing to do, for I had to pick my way among a lot of wigwams, the occupants of which might possibly not be asleep, and might look out to see who the intruder was. I got through, however, without any mishap, except one, which might have been worse, for just as I was nearing the point towards which I was making, I stumbled against something outside of one of the huts, which fell with a somewhat loud noise. I had just time to fall flat on the ground, and lie there quite motionless, when I was startled by the vision of a dark face appearing at the entrance of the hut near which I was. Luckily, the fellow was too sleepy to notice me in the position in which I was, and contenting himself with a glance outside, which seemed to satisfy him that all was right, went in again. Getting up again, I was a moment after at the stockade, the entrance through which did not take long to find, as it was just near where I was. This entrance was closed by a sort of door without hinges, fastened inside by heavy wooden bars and props, the removing of which could hardly be effected without imminent risk of discovery. I, after an examination of the obstacle, determined to climb over it—an easier thing than opening it. A row of spikes made of hard wood was at the top; but as the inside offered plenty of facilities for scaling, I was soon at the other side, and listening intently for any indications of my having been seen by any possible sentry,—for the night was, as I said, very clear. No noise proclaiming that this was the case,

I made towards the bush at some distance away, under the shelter of which I had no more to fear for the present.

Now, however, that I had got out, and had time to think about my position, I perceived that as yet my chances were not the best for getting back to the settlement; putting out of consideration the likelihood of my being followed and tracked out, how was I to find my way through the dense jungle through which we had passed in approaching the Caffre village, and how to sustain myself in the mean time, ignorant as I was of woodcraft and the art of making a living out of little or nothing, and unprovided with any firearm? Determined to make the best of the matter, and thankful that things had gone on well so far, I made towards a point outside the stockade, where a lot of cattle were collected in a sort of "corral," into which they were driven at night for safety, keeping well in the shade of the trees. Here a number of horses were picketed, as I could distinguish faintly their forms in the darkness; they were not to be got at, though, for they were plainly well watched, the slim figures of several natives being visible on the outskirts of the herd. There was plainly nothing for it but to wait for something to turn up; if I could get at one of the horses my chances of escape would be, I thought, much better, for I perceived a stretch of open ground on the right, which seemed to go towards the point to which I was bound, and by following which there might be more chance of finding my way home than by proceeding through the forest.

I had just sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree to watch my opportunity, when a tremendous yelling arose from the village; they had just found out the fact of my having escaped, a little too soon. While hesitating whether to rush forward, and at the risk of instant capture get hold of one of the horses, or plunge into the forest, which would effectually shelter me from my friends, I perceived that the Caffres left in charge of the animals were startled by the noise inside, and imagining, no doubt, that an enemy was on them, were running as fast as they could towards the entrance of the stockade. Taking advantage of this diversion, I rushed forward, and was soon among the horses, who, startled by the sudden noise, were plunging and kicking furiously. Heedless of this, I sought among them for my own steed, which I knew would, in case his leg was all right, soon carry me beyond all pursuit. He was soon discovered, and after some little difficulty I got him safe from amidst his half-wild companions, and having satisfied myself that the Caffres, seeing, doubtless, the value of the animal, had mended his foot, I jumped on his back and rode away, having first secured a blanket, which served me for a saddle, together with a spear, both which articles had been left behind by one of the watchmen in his hurry to get off. This little episode was, however, noticed from the stockade, and in a moment after, on turning round, I could see the whole of the male portion of the tribe in full chase, a thing which, however, gave me no uneasiness, as I had full con-

fidence in the abilities of my horse to beat easily any one of those of the natives.

Several balls which came whistling about my ears, however, warned me of another mode of reaching me, which it would be well to avoid, so I put my steed to her utmost speed to get out of range, which it did not take long to do, and in half an hour, on looking behind me, I could not see a single horseman, although the plain, lighted up by the countless stars which glistened in the heavens, was visible enough for me to make out any moving object on either side. It was not for some thirty hours more, however, that I contrived by following, as near as I could guess at it, the direction of the settlement, that I arrived there nearly starved, for not having been able to find any food except a few roots, which I had devoured without the slightest notion as to whether they were poison or not. My arrival was a regular event, for I had been given up as lost, and was welcomed accordingly as one arisen from the dead.

AN ARTIST IN LOVE.

It is on a pleasant evening in April that the present writer takes the liberty of introducing himself to the reader of these pages. Though I have no reason to be ashamed of my birth and education, yet I am not a gentleman, if wealth and station are necessary qualifications for that rank. You, my gentle reader, would never be likely to meet me in good society (for, like all modern writers of light literature, I always assume that my readers move in the very highest circles; how, then, should they be likely to visit the unfashionable regions of Millbank, where my humble chambers are located?). As for my occupation, I teach singing in two or three ladies' schools; as the prospectus of one of those establishments will testify, wherein I am described as the "professor of eminence who gives instruction in the theory and practice of vocal music." When I add that the generous lady principal remunerates her eminent professor at a very few shillings per lesson, you will not wonder that I do not live on a scale of great magnificence. However, I have sufficient for my moderate needs; and as I shall never marry, I am not discontented. If Sophia had not proved inconstant, I might have repined at that poverty which would have embittered the matrimonial hearth; but another, and, I humbly think, less happy lot was in store for that young lady, when a wealthy but oft-inebriated stockbroker obtained at Saint Pancras' Church the right to beat and bruise that delicate form I had once hoped to lead to the altar, and to blacken those eyes that in other days were wont to gaze lovingly into mine.

It was the evening of Good Friday, and I was on my way home from Saint James's Church, when I saw an old man, apparently blind, standing on the kerbstone at the end of Vauxhall Bridge, doubtful whether he should brave the danger of the stream of traffic, which was unusually great, on account of the crowds of returning pleasure-seekers. A young man of handsome appearance, with a tremendous beard and moustache, took his arm and led him across, then left him and came rapidly in my direction; it was my friend Jack Hartley. On recognizing me he nearly knocked me down with a slap on the shoulder, and then half tore my arm from its socket by his hearty shake of my hand. "George," said he, "come along to my quarters; I've got some drawings to show you, and then we'll have a talk about Agnes." I yielded, and turned back with him.

Jack Hartley was a pre-Raphaelite painter, and one of the cleverest as well as most honest and simple-minded of his tribe. Five years before the evening of which I speak he had attained his majority, and had just returned from college, when his father made arrangements with an eminent solicitor to receive him into his office; but Jack, who would work night and day at his pictures, felt no delight in the drudgery of

the law, and declined the proposition. Such a refusal old Ralph Hartley was not the man to forgive, and the young man was forced to quit his home, and to exist as best he could upon the scanty income of a young, unknown, and friendless artist. He lived in Westminster, having chosen rooms in that neighbourhood mainly on account of their moderate rents, and partly, perhaps, because of their proximity to the Abbey, a building for which he felt almost boundless admiration, and in and about which he spent not a little of his leisure time. Perhaps few would sympathize with the enthusiasm with which Hartley regarded such edifices as the grand old minster; he loved to wander round the cloisters in the evening, and picture the scene as it would have presented itself hundreds of years ago; his imagination would revert to the time when that now mouldering tracery was white and new beneath the chisel of the sculptor; he would see him chipping out some intricate leafy finial, not like a mason of the present day, following with mechanical precision every line of the architect's drawing, but left free to follow his own devices, and so putting his whole soul into his work. That art workman of the thirteenth century had been early this morning in the green fields, and had picked up some leaves of thistles and wild flowers, and brought them home in his satchel. Now he is patiently copying their forms in crocket or finial, and ere yet they are withered away he will have immortalized them in the hard stone. It was in a great measure because he knew that it was wrought in this way that Jack was often more interested in four square inches of carved stone than in miles of neatly smoothed stucco, or hundreds of Corinthian capitals and Greek cornices, accurately moulded in cement by men who might as well be machines for all that they know of or care for the work they produce.

I first met Jack Hartley at a school which I attended; the same young ladies whom I endeavoured to train into pianists and vocalists were by him initiated into the mysteries of drawing and painting; the chance acquaintance thus formed soon ripened into a fast friendship. Yet two more differently constituted beings it would be difficult to find. I was reserved and diffident, and although many changes of fortune had befallen me, I seldom felt any great amount of elation at success, or of despondency in reverses; if I felt them they did not affect my external composure, and were only mentioned to my friend Hartley. He, on the other hand, was excitable, communicative, and transparent; a very small matter would fill him with exultation, or plunge him into despair. But we had one characteristic in common; each cherished a deep love for his art, and for the beauties of nature. How often has some cheap railway excursion enabled us to escape for a day into the country, and, avoiding the beaten track, find our way to some beautiful spot where Jack could set up his portable easel, and try for the fiftieth time to catch on his canvas some of the glorious tints of the sunset, or else lay down on his face, and copy, after the manner of pre-Raphaelites, every leaf and

stem of a cluster of convolvuluses, weeds, and ferns; I, the while, contentedly following his pencil, or stretched at full length on the grass watching the drifting clouds.

And now Hartley and I are partaking of a modest meal at Westminster; we are sitting in the studio, and he has one other room in which he sleeps; this he considers rather extravagant, for he is poorer than I; but it was impossible to receive his patrons in an apartment which also served the purpose of a bedroom. It was quite different from the ordinary *atelier*; there were no lay figures, no antique casts, no armour of very doubtful antiquity, no Wardour Street furniture. On the mantelpiece was a large bouquet of flowers; the window was somewhat obscured by the foliage of passion flowers and other creepers; but compensation was made for the light thus excluded by a large skylight in the sloping roof. The walls were coloured a light blue, studded with *fleurs-de-lis*, and with panels containing historical pictures resembling frescoes, while numerous illuminated inscriptions figured on the walls. All this was, of course, the work of Hartley, who had thus employed the hours he could spare from study, work, and exercise.

"Well," said Jack, "I suppose Miss Carkins's young friends are dispersed for the Easter holidays. How was my angel when last you were in that classical seminary?"

"She was looking," I replied, "as beautiful as ever; but I thought she seemed very sad as she timidly asked me why you had not been to give lessons lately. Jack, take my word for it, she loves you."

"I sometimes think she does," said he; "and so Miss Carkins will have to find another drawing-master. I dare not go there and be betrayed some day into some foolish declaration."

"Why not propose to her?"

"What! and break her mother's heart, if she were foolish enough to consent to marry a pauper? You know she means her for her favourite nephew and ward, Frank Walford; besides, I'm not so absurd as to suppose that Miss Carrington, the heiress, would be happier in a miserable hole like this than as the wife of that young fellow with his ancestral estates and his ten thousand a year."

"And his empty head," I broke in rather impatiently, "and his heartless vanity and selfishness. Why, he would break her heart in six months; while you, with your talents and industry, will soon be first in your profession; and if she loves you she can't mind roughing it for a year or two."

"It won't do, I tell you," said he; "Mrs. Carrington is as fond of Frank as though he were her own child; she has planned this marriage from their childhood, and no doubt as soon as Frank is of age she will be his wife; so I shall emigrate, or enlist for a soldier, or something."

"Instead of doing anything so desperate," I interposed, "why not come for the three weeks' trip on the Continent which I proposed a

month ago? Say up the Rhine, where you can gloat over the old Romanesque churches, and potter about among the ruined castles on the banks of the mighty river."

So it was settled that in a month or two we should leave England, and in the mean time I was to look up my knowledge of French and German, and Hartley to study Whewell's "Gothic Architecture of Germany," and a dozen similar works. Possibly the acute reader may here express surprise that two poor fellows like us should think of indulging in the expensive luxury of foreign travel; but the fact was, that I had been saving for this very purpose, and Hartley would be able to spare something out of the £50 which he had received last week from a dealer for a picture which took him about a year to paint. Besides, so delightful was the prospect of such a trip to us, that we were quite prepared to deny ourselves all but the necessities of life for a time to effect our purpose.

Before I left my friend that night he took from his portfolio something elaborately wrapped in a multitude of tissue paper coverings; it was an illuminated design, which he told me was painted by Miss Carrington last Christmas. The composition was simple, yet very beautiful; a Greek cross in a wreath of holly, and underneath the words of the angels' Christmas song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men. One of Hartley's duties at Miss Carkins's was to teach "illuminating" to Agnes Carrington. He had studied it very deeply, and he found in his fair pupil one who sympathized with him in his love for that as well as for other branches of art; thus were they unconsciously drawn together, and hence grew up between them a something more than friendship, the presence of which in his own bosom Hartley had only of late discovered. Agnes at present knew not that it existed in her own.

If I did not know that the scenes through which we passed on that summer journey have been over and over again described in a far more satisfactory manner than I could hope to attain to, I should be tempted to take the patient reader through Bruges, Ghent, Louvain, and Liege, and indulge him with crude descriptions from my diary in the style which a writer has denominated "Murray and water," but in mercy to him I pass over the earlier stages of our journey.

We arrived early in the morning at Aix-la-Chapelle, and went straight to the cathedral. After spending a considerable time in exploring the numerous objects of interest, we inquired for the sacristan, with a view of seeing the famous relics. As we neared the sacristy two young men came sauntering out, talking and laughing after the manner of Englishmen in foreign churches. They had evidently been to see the relics; and with pardonable curiosity I glanced at the open visitors' book, in which they had just entered their names, and started at seeing "Francis Walford, 11th Hussars, Angleterre," followed by two other signatures. "So

Frank is here, is he?" thought I; "and probably his aunt and cousin too. Miss Agnes told me they contemplated a tour this summer. It will be better that Jack should not know how near they are; it would only unsettle him." So to prevent Hartley seeing young Walford's signature, I hastily entered our names, and closed the book. The next evening we went by railway to Cologne, with a collection of fellow-travellers in our compartment such as one must go out of England to see—a priest in his cassock; two Sisters of Mercy, who never lifted their eyes from their little black books; a monk, in his coarse brown dress and girdle of knotted rope; and, lastly, a young German, who evinced his affection for the lady who accompanied him in a very demonstrative manner, quite unabashed by the presence of the clergy, secular and regular.

It was a calm, clear evening when we leaned out of our bedroom window at Cologne, and began to feel we were really in the presence of the Rhine; its broad stream lay immediately beneath us. The red rays of the setting sun warmed the spires and roofs of the little town of Deutz, on the other side of the river; and away on the right, twenty miles off, frowned "the castled crag of Drachenfels." Hartley, as might have been expected from his excitable temperament, began to get very sentimental, and by the time the twilight had given place to the moon and stars, nothing would do but he must begin reciting poetry:—

"But thou, exulting and abounding river!
 Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
 Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever,
 Could man but leave thy bright creation so;"

and a great deal more to the same effect. I do not know how long Hartley continued his poetical outbursts; for being myself of a less romantic disposition, I succeeded in composing myself to sleep; the last thing I remembered being the sight of that gentleman standing on his bed, gazing ardently at a photographic miniature, and shouting,—

"But one thing want these banks of Rhine—
 Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine;"

probably referring to Agnes.

The Continental traveller, if he be one who takes any interest in archæology, cannot have forgotten the ancient Church of the Apostles at Cologne; certainly he would never have forgotten it if he had heard Hartley rapturously discovering and pointing out the grandest features of that incomparable specimen of Romanesque architecture. Those who are accustomed to the present ruinous or fragmentary state of specimens of the eleventh and twelfth century styles in England are naturally astonished to see, on the Continent, churches and other buildings of the same period which, to all appearance, have escaped the ravages of time, war, and fanaticism for six or seven hundred years. We were standing in the new market, a large square, which commands an excellent view of the east end

of the church, when Hartley, whose attention was drawn for a moment to two ladies and a gentleman at the farther end of the square, suddenly started and turned pale; he had recognized in one of them Miss Agnes Carrington. We could not be mistaken in that beautiful face, of a type very rare among English women. She always reminded me of the representations of saints and angels in the paintings of the early Florentine masters, such as Fra Angelico and Andrea Orcagna; so strikingly was the resemblance felt, that Hartley used to say that if her portrait were painted it would hardly look complete without the gilded nimbus round her head. In contrast with a complexion so delicately fair, her dark, dreamy-looking eyes produced an impression which, even by the casual observer, was not soon forgotten. Her mother was with her—a portly, aristocratic-looking woman,—and the two ladies were escorted by a gentleman of fashionable appearance, in whom we had no difficulty in recognizing Frank Walford.

As they came nearer Miss Carrington observed us. The sight of Hartley seemed to cause her some embarrassment; she blushed and seemed to hesitate as to the way in which she should meet him; but Agnes was not the woman to slight one upon whom she had looked as a friend, and when she came to where we stood, the simple-hearted girl shook us both by the hand, saying, “What a singular meeting, Mr. Hartley! who would have expected to see you so far from home? Let me introduce you to mamma and my cousin Frank.—Mamma, these gentlemen you know by name already, Mr. Hartley and Mr. Lane.” Walford, up to that moment engaged in contemplating Hartley through his eye-glass, and by the perplexity and annoyance in his countenance showing that Agnes’s blush and Hartley’s embarrassment had not escaped him, now condescended to remark,—“And pway would it be considered wude to inquire who *are* Mr. Hartley and Mr. Lane?” “They are two of the gentlemen at Miss Carkins’s. You have often praised my singing,—for that you must thank Mr. Lane; and you say I draw nicely,—that I owe to Mr. Hartley.” “What, is he a dwawing-master?” said Walford, still staring at Jack through his glass. “Howidly bad twade, isn’t it? wetched pay?” He would have continued in the same strain, in spite of his cousin’s look of disgust, had not Mrs. Carrington interrupted him by addressing to us a few polite remarks, uttered with much kindness of manner (for Mrs. Carrington was too good-hearted to wound any one by pride or coldness), but yet with just enough of that indefinable restraint of tone to show that she was quite aware of the distance between Mrs. Carrington of Carrington Park and the professors of painting and music.

After leaving them we walked for some minutes in silence down the Cäcilien-Strasse, and I glanced anxiously at Jack to see what effect had been produced on him by the rencontre, so unexpected on his part, though of course I was more prepared for it by having seen Walford’s name in the book at Aix-la-Chapelle; I was much relieved to find that his variable temperament had in this instance led him to hope for the happiest results

from this chance meeting. We concluded our morning's tour through the city by a visit to the Church of Santa Maria in Capitoło (built about the year 1000 on the site of the capitol of the Roman city), and then returned to our hotel through some streets in which the far-famed effluvia of the city were to be met with in perfection.

The next morning we took steamer to Coblenz, dined at the *table d'hôte* on deck under an awning which protected us from the fierce heat of the sun, and afterwards drank Niersteiner and Rudesheimer as we glided past the vine-clad hills and castled heights.

The next day at Coblenz Hartley received letters from London, bringing him unhopèd-for good news. A nobleman well known as a connoisseur of great judgment had seen one of Jack's best pictures, "The Burial of Charles the First," and had formed so high an opinion of the painter's ability that, hearing he was travelling on the Rhine, he wrote to commission him, on the most liberal terms, to paint on the spot a subject from one of the legends of the Lurlei-berg. In consequence of these instructions we took up our residence at Saint Goarshausen, and Hartley began to work at the picture. There was now no doubt that a brilliant career was opening before him; no sooner was it known that Lord Hawkesborough had given him a commission than he received two others for subjects the scene of which was to be laid in the same locality, as well as a proposal from an eminent publisher to illustrate a work on the history and antiquities of Rhenish Germany.

His first thought, in the prospect of coming fame and fortune, seemed to be that the distance between Agnes and himself was daily lessening. That he might raise himself to a position in some degree equal to her own, he began to toil for riches with an energy he would have scorned to exert to secure money or fame for their own sake. In spite of his rising fame, Hartley would never have been rich but for some such motive as this. With no relatives for whom to provide, he was too generous and open-handed, and his aspirations were too high, to permit him to fix his mind on the acquisition of wealth. He would never have been in danger of having his career recorded in such books as "Self-help," or "Men who have Risen," amongst those who have succeeded; for mark, it is the *success* of the "self-helper" which secures him the distinction of a place in such works, not the good qualities by which they say the success was attained. They point to a city merchant of almost fabulous wealth, and they tell us he was once a common working man, and that by perseverance in a course of industry and integrity he has attained his present position; but will they presume to say that there are not thousands of working men, not a whit less deserving of praise for honesty, industry, and perseverance, who never dream of striving for colossal fortunes, simply because, having enough for their needs and for those dependent on them, they see no sufficient reason for giving up the best years of their life to unremitting toil for no higher object than the hope of gain? They may perhaps, and

not very unreasonably, doubt the power of riches to confer happiness; they may see scope enough in humbler life, not merely for honesty and industry, but for cultivating their intellects, benefiting their fellow-creatures, doing their duty nobly in this life, and preparing for another. If ever I could so far over-estimate my abilities as to imagine I could write a book, it should be devoted to the praise of these nameless and unambitious heroes, and the title thereof should be, "Men who have *not* Risen."

We had been stopping at St. Goarshausen some weeks, when Hartley found the following paragraph in a number of the *Morning Post*, some days old:—"We are enabled to announce authoritatively the approaching marriage of Francis Walford, Esquire, Cornet 11th Hussars, eldest son of the late Francis Bardsley Walford, Esquire, of Mount Arlington Chase, Yorkshire, with Miss Agnes Isabella Carrington, only daughter of the late Spencer Carrington, Esquire, of Carrington Park, Hants. Mrs. and Miss Carrington and Mr. Walford are at present travelling in Germany and Switzerland, and immediately on their return the marriage will be solemnized, should Miss Carrington, who we regret to hear is unwell, have recovered her health." Had the matter been less serious it would have been quite laughable to watch the effect of this little paragraph upon Jack; he began to bewail his unhappy fate in the most desponding manner, declaring he should never smile again. I urged him to exert himself to prevent a calamity which certainly seemed likely to drive him to despair. I counselled him to seek out the Carringtons, ascertain the truth of the rumour, and learn his fate. The only difficulty was to find where the young lady was staying, and to effect this I made arrangements for the visitors' lists to be sent to us daily from all the chief summer resorts of Germany. We were shortly gratified by finding the names we sought in the *Kur-list* of Wiesbaden, and we lost no time in repairing to that place.

Soon after quitting the railway station we found ourselves in a large square planted with flowers, amongst which two fountains flung up columns of cool spray into the sultry air. The *Kur-saal-platz* was bounded on two sides by colonnades of bazaars; on the third was the building which contained the gaming saloons and assembly-rooms; and opposite that building stood the theatre and the *Vier-Jahrzeiten* hotel, where, it appeared, the Carringtons were staying. My lovelorn companion made me walk up and down in front of the hotel in hopes of catching a glimpse of his lady-love, but after about an hour spent in this to me rather uninteresting pursuit, I suggested the chance of their having gone into the grounds behind the *Kur-saal*, and thither we repaired. Daylight was rapidly giving place to darkness when we found ourselves in the midst of a scene of enchantment, a kind of half-dissipated fairy-land,—bands playing, lamps glittering among the trees, gay promenaders sauntering among the flowers and round the lakes. Having ascended a mound, at the summit of which was an elegant rosery, we had not been there many minutes before we heard voices in the shrubbery beneath, and almost before we

were aware we had overheard a conversation, the subject of which was of intense interest at least to one of us. Hartley was no eavesdropper, and would have quitted the spot, but the only pathway by which we could leave our post would have brought us face to face with the speakers, Agnes and Mrs. Carrington, and after having remained hidden so long we feared to make our appearance, and thus reveal that part of their conversation had been overheard. After a few less important passages,—

"My dear child," said Mrs. Carrington, "you treat Frank shamefully. His devotion to you is something wonderful; it shows what a sweet temper the dear boy must have to continue his assiduous attention in spite of your contemptuous manner and satirical answers. I don't wish to interfere unduly, but I think something more is due to him as your affianced lover."

"Mamma, I have told you before that I cannot endure him, and I certainly will not marry him even now if I can help it. I cannot think how you can try to force me into such an odious engagement."

"I hope, my dear, your mind is not prepossessed with an attachment to some one unworthy of you. Surely, my child," proceeded she, with growing uneasiness manifest in her voice, "I'm not to attribute your embarrassment on meeting Mr. Hartley to any such cause. Why, you are positively blushing! Surely you cannot have so far forgotten your position as to encourage any attention from that penniless though I dare say very respectable and gentlemanly young man?"

At this period of the dialogue the voices of the speakers grew less distinct as they moved away, and we, being released from our somewhat delicate position, left the rosery, and descended to mix among the gay crowd promenading under the lamps or seated round the orchestra, sipping Rhenish wine or lemonade. Hartley, with his usual reckless impetuosity, elated by the hopes which the conversation in the shrubbery had excited in him, wanted to seek them out at once, explain the improvement in his prospects, and throw himself at the feet of Agnes. But even had such a course been consistent with my cooler and more calculating advice, it would not have been easy to find them among the crowd. Instead of attempting to do so, we walked to the *Kur-saal*, passing through four or five luxuriously appointed rooms, half of which were devoted to *rouge et noir*, and the remainder to *roulette*, all crowded with the fashionable and the gay of all nations. Again and again was heard above the buzz of conversation the ringing voice of the croupiers, "*Rouge gagne, noir perde: sai' l' jeu, messieurs.*"

We presently descried young Walford actively engaged at the roulette-table; and soon saw that he was losing, in spite of the continual promptings of a dark little Frenchman with a hooked nose and sinister-looking eyes. The face of that man, and the influence he seemed to exercise over Frank, made a great impression upon me. I could not help remarking to Jack, "That man has got young Walford under his thumb, and will help him

to his ruin in no time." In a few moments we saw a young lady make her way through the group of gentlemen at the doorway, one or two of whom acknowledged her presence with a bow, while the majority exchanged shrugs and significant smiles with each other as she passed them. She leant on the arm of a stupid and impassive-looking German, whom she dismissed, somewhat mortified, and approached the table, attracting by a slight gesture the attention of our friend the Frenchman. He turned, addressed her, but without allowing Frank to observe that he did so. "This is the young gentleman," whispered he, directing her attention to his companion. "I have succeeded, Adele, in gaining his confidence; he is already half in love with you from my description, and now I shall leave you to carry out the rest. I have ascertained that my impressions about the amount of his fortune were quite correct."

He then touched Frank on the shoulder, and introduced the lady, in English—doubtless Walford's knowledge of French was but indifferent,—as Madame la Comtesse de Sainte Emile de Beziers. Walford seemed overpowered by her undeniable beauty and fascinating manner. "I am truly charmed," said she, in the same language, and with an accent wonderfully like that of a native of the country, "to make the acquaintance of Monsieur, of whom I have heard much; my poor dear husband was in his lifetime much attached to the English, and we often travelled in your country." Hartley whispered to me that he could have sworn he had seen her in England, if it had been possible to believe that the graceful young dowager countess had once employed her talents in the tasteful arrangement of bonnets in the windows of an Oxford Street milliner. We heard no more of their conversation, but often in the course of the evening we met Frank and the "countess;" and each time the former appeared more thoroughly devoted to his fair companion.

It was impossible to disguise from ourselves the fact that a deep plot was laid for the ruin of young Walford: the wily Frenchman knowing him to be heir to a large fortune, and finding him an easy prey, had determined with the assistance of the adventuress to fleece him as completely as possible. Of the way in which they proposed to effect this we were then ignorant; but we felt bound to warn Mrs. Carrington, and the more so when inquiry confirmed our suspicions on the subject of the *soi-disant* countess.

The mother of Agnes received us very graciously the next morning; she had, it appeared, heard of Hartley's success in his profession and improving prospects, and perhaps the slight coldness of her manner on the former occasion was somewhat modified in consequence. She was greatly alarmed by our account of Frank's proceedings; he had, she said, been confided to her care by his mother almost with her last breath, and she had promised her dying sister to treat the orphan as her own son; she implored us to see him, and if possible extricate him from the toils of the fair enchantress.

The reader will readily believe that on our undertaking the very difficult task imposed on us by Mrs. Carrington, we did not meet with a very encouraging reception. A volley of oaths, and a forcible injunction to mind our own business, was Frank Walford's reply to a delicate hint of the wisdom of care in choosing acquaintances in a place so full of swindlers and blacklegs as Wiesbaden. We had, therefore, given up all hope of doing much good, when in about a week's time we were surprised by a visit from Mrs. Carrington, in a state of extreme agitation, who told us that Frank had suddenly quitted the town, leaving her a note to the following effect :—

“MY DEAREST AUNT,—I have reason to believe that you would object to the course I am about to take, and as I am not yet of age, you have the power to interfere. By this evening, therefore, I shall be many miles from Wiesbaden, and before it will be possible to follow and prevent it, I shall have become the happy husband of the most amiable and gifted woman in the world, a lady of surpassing beauty and exalted rank. When I shall have introduced her as my wife (which at present your prejudice against foreigners renders impossible), and when your first feeling of annoyance has passed away, you will be glad to find I have made this choice, instead of vainly striving to gain my cousin Agnes, who, as you may have remarked, has taken a most unquestionable dislike to me.

“Your affectionate nephew,

“FRANK.”

While Jack and I were reading this letter, Mrs. Carrington was in a pitiable state of anxiety and impatience. “What shall I do?” she cried, when we had arrived at the conclusion. “Can you help or advise me? I have no friends in this place—I can do nothing myself; and yet if Frank marries this creature, he is ruined, and I shall never forgive myself. Why did I bring the boy to this dreadful place?” Hartley and I briefly intimated that we would follow, and if possible prevent the catastrophe, and the same afternoon saw us speeding on our way to Mayence; for from the railway clerk we learnt that a lady and two gentlemen answering to the description of our friends had taken tickets for Brussels by that line. We took with us a kind of private detective, a man experienced in these matters; and from him we gathered that the object of the fair adventuress was doubtless to secure a permanent hold upon Frank and his fortune, by a marriage, the validity of which it would be impossible or at least difficult to disprove. It was not likely, he said, that they would remain in Brussels, where the two conspirators were somewhat too well known to the police; they would probably hasten to some smaller town, and get a licence at the British Consulate, or perhaps cross the Channel and be married in England.

I pass over the long and weary journey by railway, the more tedious since we had no idea whether or no we were gaining on the fugitives, and because nothing that we could do could hasten our progress and make up for the time that was lost. How much less interesting is the recital of

an adventure of this kind in the prosaic times of railways than such as are related in works of fiction, when in the days of post-chaises the excited pursuer, seeing the fugitives only a mile ahead on the dusty road, urges on the flagging postboys by preposterous offers of untold gold! I pass over the three or four days lost in tracing their course from Brussels, the discovery by our acute companion that they were in Ostend, awaiting the expiration of the week's notice prescribed by law, and our arrival in the town on the morning of the wedding.

A small company was gathered before the altar of the English church at Ostend; the British consul, the little Frenchman, and a few strangers attracted by curiosity, formed the entire group who witnessed the ceremony. As Hartley and I rushed in, we heard the clear, impressive voice of the English chaplain,—

“Therefore if any man can show any just cause why they may not be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.”

Then followed confusion—Hartley forbade the marriage on the ground of Frank's minority, and the disapproval of his guardian. The production of a declaration of Mrs. Carrington to that effect, and other papers, was considered by the chaplain and the consul a conclusive reason for postponing the marriage for the present. In vain Frank remonstrated and the girl wept, while the Frenchman ground his teeth and cursed Hartley with the greatest volubility. He would, perhaps, have proceeded to more violent methods of showing his annoyance, had not our friend the detective at this moment made his appearance, at sight of whom the pair of conspirators slunk out of the building and were seen no more.

In the pretty village church near Carrington Park, I heard once more the same solemn demand, if there was any just cause why man and maid should not be joined together; but now no dissentient voice was raised, and none doubted, in that happy company, that a happier lot could not have been desired for either, as Agnes and Hartley knelt side by side.



A LIFE'S MYSTERY.

BY CLINTON HOPE.

CHAPTER I.

LILLAS.

SEDGLEY HALL, a fine old mansion situated on the Sussex coast, had been for many centuries the seat of the noble family of Bellamy. It was elaborate in costly masonry, and rich in the various styles of architecture which had been in vogue during the several periods of its successive possessors; all having left behind them, as a relic of their ownership, some addition to the venerable and stately edifice. The site was picturesque and beautiful in the extreme: on the east the Hall was hedged in by the foaming sea, which dashed at times with startling violence against the cliff; and to the west lay a thickly wooded park, where the timid deer learned to be bold from a consciousness of their security.

In the rear of the Hall, beyond the orchard, stretched an unbounded prospect of grass-land, divided here and there by tiny streams that looked in the distance like silver cords, now brightly visible, now hidden by the undulations of the meadow, and anon coming into sight between the gaps of the willow branches drooping on their banks. On approaching the house from the road there was nothing to arrest your attention from the quaint grandeur of its structure, the tall thick elms skirting the carriage-drive effectually excluding all other objects. From the front windows, however, the view was fine and extensive; directly before you was the smooth lawn, dotted with clustering May flowers; and farther on a large fish-pond, well-nigh covered with aquatic plants and weeds which had not been disturbed for many a day, except by its finny inmates, who would dart occasionally to the surface in search of some unlucky insect, and then re-bury themselves beneath the verdant covering. It was at the

back of the pond the high road appeared, over which for the most part a depressing stillness reigned: but sometimes the cheering bugle would awake the echo of the neighbouring hills; at others the farmers' teams, clattering by on their way to and from the village, momentarily broke the hush, made all the more profound by the interruption of the waggoners' voices, as they cheered on their sluggish horses.

The present owner of Sedgley, Sir Shenton Bellamy, had turned his fifty-fifth year, yet still he was a handsome man, of the true Saxon type, tall, fair, and robust. Being ever ready to assist in the cause of the oppressed and weak, he was universally beloved by his dependants, and his candour, generosity, and true manliness insured for him the cordial good-will and respect of his equals, by whom his society was eagerly sought. Although possessing the kindest and gentlest of hearts, he was, notwithstanding, a proud man, glorying, not ingloriously, in the renown which was associated with the time-hallowed names of his great forefathers, who, tradition tells us, performed such prodigies of valour in the chivalrous days of old. But how different such pride from the vulgar arrogance of pretentious wealth, which relies solely upon its own fancied merit for distinction! The haughtiness that tinged his bearing was the reflex of a laudable ambition to sustain the honour of his race. With a soul naturally inclined to the sweets of domestic life, it was a marvel to many that he should have remained a bachelor until he was considerably past thirty years of age, but so it was; and whether the fault lay in his fastidiousness of taste, or in the fair bevy who would but too eagerly have accepted his alliance, certain it is that, up to the period of his acquaintance with the amiable girl he made his wife, he had felt nothing stronger than a passing fancy for the captivating anglers who threw out their baits with such unwearying diligence and self-approved cunning.

At length, when fate led him to fair Italy, from amongst whose beauteous daughters he found the being whom Heaven seemed to have designed for his partner, the indifference he had previously manifested to the softer passion was quickly changed to a delighted and complete submission to the call of love. The object of his choice was the daughter of an unfortunate noble, who had suffered most severely through political changes, and out of a once vast inheritance now held little more than his untainted honour and a barren title.

As the Count and Countess Revola had a large family (all younger than Inez), whose future pressed greatly upon their minds, they were naturally much relieved at the prospect of her being so eligibly provided for, and raised no objection to her departure for England; while for the young girl herself, she was too sincerely attached to the baronet to refuse his hand, even though her acceptance of it necessitated an estrangement from her cherished home. She had no fear for the constancy of her lover's devotion, and without a single misgiving tore herself away from the embraces of her sorrowing and fondly loved relatives, to follow

the fortunes of the man to whom she had just plighted her virgin troth. Nor was her confidence misplaced; true, Sir Shenton had left behind him the days of youthful romance, but he was not the less capable on that account of entertaining an ardent attachment; and while his love was based on exalted esteem, he had no want of appreciation for the personal graces of his bride. His love had at once the fire and poetry of passion, the strength and stability of friendship; to him his young wife was not merely the fairest of the fair, but an angel amongst the best and most lovable of women. Thus it may easily be imagined with what fulness of joy Sir Shenton installed the sweet Inez as mistress in the abode of his ancestors, where he expected her to flourish and bloom as in the soft southern atmosphere of Italy, never remembering that exotics oft wither and die from the exposure that invigorates the hardy native plant. Early this tender flower began to fade through the transplanting, slowly at first, then hastening with rapid strides to decay. Inez loved her kind and noble husband with the whole vehement intensity of her strong nature, yet she was not entirely happy. A yearning, too great for repression, and even utterance, after the friends so far away, and the warmth and beauty of her native land, preyed secretly upon her heart, and gradually undermined her health. Her every other wish might meet with immediate gratification, but still the unexpressed want remained for her mother's fond care, her father's praise, and sisters' love. The prospect here might be fine, and the sky blue; but for her no scene was lovely that did not embrace the orange grove and vineyard, and no sky so fraught with charms as the deep and cloudless azure of her own clime. She never murmured against the cold mists and bleak winds of England, lest she should wound her husband's prejudice for his country; nor yet allowed the silent wish of her soul to fly back to the dear ones from whom she had been so long severed, to be visible to his sight; and with a painful apathy agreed to every proposition formed for her amusement or benefit, whilst inwardly feeling the inutility of all efforts to restore her lost strength and vivacity.

If Sir Shenton was utterly unconscious of his wife's nourished regrets, and the sad conviction she entertained of her early doom, he could not be unmindful of her evident indisposition, which did not, however, excite in him any great alarm, as he attributed it to a very different cause from its true one; confidently assuring himself that at the birth of their child all her ailments must vanish. He had not the remotest thought of danger; the possibility that he might be bereft of his treasure would have been far too terrible to entertain for an instant.

The rich tint faded day by day from Lady Bellamy's cheek, leaving it pale and sunken, and it may be said that her debility increased hourly. The critical time was near when she must fall a victim to the insidious disease that lurked within her, unless snatched from the grave by one of those happy changes which sometimes attend maternity.

It was a chilly morning in spring ; a sleet was falling thickly over the grounds of Sedgley, and the gathering clouds darkly shadowed them, when Sir Shenton was hailed with the glad tidings that he was a father. With what delighted emotions was his heart agitated as he sought the room in which his young wife and firstborn lay ! With motherly pride my lady drew his attention to the great dark eyes of his wee daughter, the counterparts of her own, brilliant and velvety as a gazelle's, and sought to trace a resemblance in its undefined lineaments to her husband's handsome face. He laughed slightly at the fancy that she should be recognizable from the mass of babyhood for weeks to come, yet gazed with a novel feeling of pride and pleasure upon the fragile little creature, who, lulled by the gentle touch of its mother, had closed its bright eyes and plunged into its first sleep. Nor, in the excess of his felicity at the preservation of his wife's life, and the additional blessing which had been bestowed upon him, did he neglect to pray for light to guide him in the fulfilment of his new and precious duty.

Inez soon joined in the rest of her babe, when the baronet quietly moved away from the bedside to indulge in luxurious anticipations of the future,—the future, that vague uncertainty which for all is peopled with disappointment.

While Sir Shenton was thus occupied the heavy clouds dispersed, and the sun, as if in sympathy with his happiness, broke full into the room, casting a golden halo upon the antique furniture and faded portraits of his ancestors, which in all the glory of bygone costumes looked down from their frames with a gloominess of aspect that neither sunlight nor shade had power to soften.

The infant heiress throve beyond all precedent, according to the nurse ; but in the mother, after the lapse of a few days, an ominous change appeared, and although physicians of the highest eminence were consulted—the baronet frantically offering a fortune to him who could restore her,—their united skill proved of no avail. Six weeks following the birth of Lilia Gertrude—for so was the child named—she was left an orphan.

Every day we may hear of widowers who, during the early months of their bereavement, appear perfectly incapable of receiving comfort, expressing by every outward sign the intensity of their affliction. But in course of time their grief, apparently so deeply rooted, takes a milder form ; black softens into grey, and in lieu of groans and sighs, encomiums on the qualities of the dear departed assail the ears of sympathetic friends. However, as months speed by, the oft-mentioned name is uttered with fast decreasing tenderness, and the very first week that his credentials of freedom have been signed by the usages of society, the *inconsolable* widower, having laid aside for ever the praise and repinings, may most likely be seen arrayed in festive attire, emerging from a church porch with a white-veiled lady leaning upon his arm. Thus it generally is : a brief

regret is followed by a life-long forgetfulness, even with such men who in the ardour of their youth have been united to the chosen of their hearts. Far different was it with the father of Liliās; his love—no mushroom growth—was neither to be replaced nor forgotten. It seemed as if his very soul had been wrenched from him in that last parting with his idol. In her tomb was buried all appreciation of pleasure, and as much as he could he excluded himself from society, in which if compelled to appear he did not fail to carry the weight of his despondency. No longer could the baying of the hounds and the huntsmen's loud cry rouse him to action. His laugh, which had in times of old resounded with such heartiness in the Hall, was heard no more; he scarcely even smiled, except when the bright face of his child caused an involuntary thrill to warm his sad heart, for he regarded Liliās with a degree of fondness bordering upon worship. It has been said that he was proud of his patrician line of descent, but what was his pride in the musty past to that he felt in the present for his daughter? She should, he promised himself, become the cleverest, the happiest, the most lovely, and the most virtuous of her sex; and as a means of consummating this end, he suffered himself and the household, as she grew up, to be governed according to her young will.

When so deplorably deprived of the affectionate solicitude of her mother, Sir Shenton considered it requisite to procure, not only a nurse who would see to the physical well-being of his daughter, but a woman whose character for discretion and amiability might constitute a suitable attendant when Liliās grew older; and in Sarah King, a respectable widow about thirty years of age, remarkable for her indomitable cheerfulness and kindness of disposition, it was conceived that the proper person had been found to undertake the rearing of the interesting orphan.

From the first moment the good woman caught sight of her charge, attired in flowing white robes, and looking the embodiment of infant serenity, she entertained for her the most exclusive affection. She never wearied of praising her beauty and ministering to her wants; constantly averring that as Miss Liliās was the handsomest and sweetest of children, she was entitled to the gratification of every desire, no matter how great or minute it might be. Then she was so healthy, and scarcely ever cried; was exempt from all those scourges of babyhood that drive fond mothers distracted through fear of losing their darlings, and nurses from want of rest. No envious blotches had marred the clearness of that pearly skin; no convulsions writhed those delicate limbs in lingering torture. True to her design of making Liliās the most enviable of beings, nature had not inflicted upon her one serious pang, either of mind or body, throughout the years of her childhood.

The vehement attachment of Sarah King for the little lady did not go unrewarded, but was returned with an ardour and firmness far in advance of her youth. It was at Liliās's entreaty that her nurse remained an

inmate of the Hall long after her situation became a sinecure; Sir Shenton could not resist her request that Sarah should be allowed to stay. Who with any heart could have done so, when she cast such earnestness of supplication into her fresh young voice, and pleaded with eyes whose dancing glee was quenched in tears?

It might be unwise to permit a woman whose love for Lillas led her to act strictly in accordance with her wishes, whatsoever turn they took, to be her chief companion and guide; but in the baronet's state of melancholy listlessness it was very excusable in him to accede to whatever could contribute to the pleasure of his darling child, whose glance and motion at times reminded him so forcibly of her never-forgotten mother: for Lillas, though generally too full of the sportive gaiety of cloudless childhood to offer many points of resemblance to her lost parent, yet bore in her occasional moods of seriousness so striking a similitude of expression, that it was with difficulty Sir Shenton could bring himself to believe it was not indeed his own Inez he strained to his throbbing breast.

Miss Bellamy disliked her governess, and declared she could not live without her nurse; so she was indulgently permitted to have her way in keeping aloof from the former as much as possible, while she was nearly always associated with the latter.

It was not until Lillas was thirteen years of age that the baronet began to consider it absolutely necessary to remove her from the close society of Sarah King for that better calculated to improve her; but in order to do this, at whatever cost to his feelings, he must send her from home, where there was little hope of her making a steady advance in education, as in truth she was undergoing the process popularly called spoiling. Although she had certainly read in a desultory way a far greater number of books than most persons double her age, they were chiefly works of romance and poetry. A brilliant and hitherto unknown world was open to her through means of her father's library, and many and many an hour of ecstatic delight did she pass in poring over the charmed pages of Byron and Moore, the spirit-stirring stories of Scott, and the wild mysteries of Monk Lewis, and Mrs. Radcliffe; but uninformed as was her reason, imaginative and impressible her heart, these stolen hours of bliss were not calculated to be productive of future good. Her brain teemed with little else than exciting relations of valour, beauty, and grandeur, but above all of *love*. Almost as soon as she could comprehend the meaning of what she read, she drank in with wondering but eager delight tales of fierce or melancholy passion, and learned to shed tears of sympathy for the distresses of excited lovers and deserted damsels. Sir Shenton knew not to what extent Lillas indulged in this class of amusement, and never hinted a suggestion that she might spend her time more profitably. But rightly considering that she needed earnest study, and, beyond, that it would be useless to introduce a new governess in place of the one so repugnant to his daughter's taste, he was finally led to the disagreeable

decision of putting her to school; as, however impossible it was for him to oppose her slightest inclination while she continued at Sedgley, he might, he thought, fortify himself against one outburst of grief at parting. Very gently did he disclose to her his fear that if she were longer allowed unrestrained liberty she would inevitably arrive at womanhood without having attained any of the accomplishments suitable to her position; and as Lilius was quickly made sensible of the justice of his apprehensions, she received with tolerable composure the expression of his design. It was a great relief to this foolishly doating parent to perceive his child so resigned to what he had anticipated would arouse in her the liveliest emotions of sorrow; and not to make the period of expectation unnecessarily long, he made a speedy application for her admission to a boarding school of high repute at Blackheath, the august mistresses of which establishment graciously consented to receive the young lady, although they had then their full complement of boarders. References were exchanged, Sir Shenton forwarded a cheque for the first half-year—it being the custom of the Misses Magendie to require prepayment,—and ultimately Lilius was taken by her father to a large gloomy house, imbedded in straggling trees, thick enough to exclude both light and air, and which in the height of summer rendered the abode cheerless and cold. Nevertheless neither this, nor other and greater objections, were allowed to influence the pupils' parents and guardians, as they considered them more than counterbalanced by the advantage of being educated under the supervision of these talented ladies; and, indeed, from the exorbitant charges made, and the difficulty generally encountered before the desired opening could be procured, it was but just that there should be some privileges connected with Clardon House. If it were merely the training of the mind that was deemed worthy of consideration, truly there was no room for complaint, as the young ladies whom the Misses Magendie "finished" were—besides being paragons of ladylike accomplishments and grace—far from being deficient in solid acquirements.

It was the *heart* that was suffered to run to waste, growing up totally uncultured, while upon the brain was exhausted the most indefatigable pains. To clothe all natural impulses in disguise was the lesson constantly inculcated; each outburst of youthful fervour was harshly repressed, and a chilling scepticism of the good and great infused into hearts which from their youth should have replied to every call upon their generosity or compassion with ready gladness and smiling sympathy. The Misses Magendie were ladies who shaped their morals like their bonnets, after the prevailing mode, and would have ridiculed as strongly the idea of independent principles as the suggestion of reviving in their own persons fashions long out of date. Their pupils were taught that to act with undeviating propriety respecting the rules of etiquette was all that society required at their hands; moreover that likes and dislikes were equally needless and dangerous. Calculation was made the rule of their lives, and they

learned to compute the chances of worldly advancement their beauty would give them in the outset of their career with more exactness than they cared to bestow upon the sums in their arithmetic. To know in what manner flatteringly to accept a favour, or refuse it without giving offence; how to coquette gracefully with a fan, a bouquet, or even with a member of the genus *homo*, were the acquirements constantly impressed upon their ductile minds as of the highest importance.

Lilias Bellamy, upon entering the school, was, as has been stated, in her fourteenth year, and she had been, when my tale opens, nearly three years a participator of the valuable (?) instructions of the Misses Magendie. At first she was much dissatisfied with the change. In her innocent breast was awakened an indescribable abhorrence to the practices of paltry deceit and cowardice she was perpetually a witness to; and upon her visit to Sussex for the vacation she expressed in very strong terms her unwillingness to return, unless—to soften the rigour of her absence from home—Sarah King were allowed to take up her abode near her; and Sir Shenton, in his overweening fondness, hesitated not to humour her fancy. Accordingly a pension, sufficient with what she had saved to supply her moderate wants, was settled upon the nurse, who was quickly located in the vicinity of the college. The Misses Magendie, being apprised of the particulars of Miss Bellamy's attachment to her nurse, readily consented to her frequent visits at Mrs. King's cottage; indeed, owing to the continual fire of presents from the baronet to the worldly-minded instructresses, Lilias was permitted to follow her own inclinations after the hours of study with nearly as little restraint as she would have been under at Sedgley.

Before proceeding farther in chronicling the events of Lilias's life, perhaps it would be well to say something more definite concerning her person and disposition. She was supremely handsome, but her beauty was of an imperious style; and though her lustrous dark eyes could melt with love and pity, the light of merriment or the fiery glow of passion and scorn seemed to assimilate better with the half-mocking expression that was wont to play around the beautiful mouth, which could, however, shape itself into a smile of ineffable sweetness. Even at her tender age her form possessed much of the ripe fulness so characteristic of her Southern extraction, and was of perfect symmetry and grace. Her complexion was fair, transcendently fair, contrasting admirably with the bright bloom upon her cheek, the crimson of her lip, and the purplish black of her glossy waving hair. For her voice, it was the divinest music,—so gentle, so thrilling, it subdued the soul involuntarily to emotions of melting softness, or roused it to aspirations lofty and sublime. While under its spell, all thought of worldly care fled, and her listeners were made, in spite of natural bent, almost poetic. And besides the attractions of her figure, face, and tones, there breathed a potent witchery about her that insinuated itself into all hearts, a charm that

existed independently of her loveliness—one only to be felt, not traced or understood.

In character, Liliās was wilful, capricious, and exacting; but in distinction to these unamiable qualities, she was generous, affectionate, and truthful to an extreme degree. Her passions were strong, powerful alike for good or evil; but under the watchful care of her father, and the blind idolatry of her nurse, nothing that was not enchanting could have been discerned in her. She was enthusiastic almost to a fault in her love of the grand and beautiful, and her vivid imagination transported her too frequently beyond the pale of the cold, unideal sphere in which she was destined to play a part. Add to the opposite traits already mentioned an unconscious dignity of mien, an untameable impetuosity that gave her no time to reason, only to feel, then act, and a temperament which discarded cheerful serenity for violent excitement, and you have as clear a conception of what Liliās was in her seventeenth year as can be formed by any one who has not listened to the melody of her accents, marked the quick changes of her entrancing countenance, followed with his eyes the movements of her sylph-like figure, nor bear witness to the frequent proofs of her noble integrity, munificent compassion, and trusting love.

Of vigorous mental qualifications, and ambitious turn of thought, she learned as if by intuition, and though never observed to study hard, excited the commendations of her teachers and the envy of her companions by the rapidity of her progress; for besides a ready power of acquiring knowledge, she possessed a memory so retentive that a treasure of learning once her own was never permitted to escape. Thus at an early age she was more completely mistress of her various exercises than most girls having the advantage of many years' seniority. Warm as were her impulses, Liliās had formed no more than one strong friendship during her school life, and the young girl in whose favour was made an exception to her usual indifference was her opposite in everything but susceptibility to love. Though nearly a year older, she looked more juvenile; her figure was less developed, and her disposition not so firmly established as Miss Bellamy's—if I may call that established which fluctuated every hour, that was gay and sad, haughty and confiding, tender and ironical, all in the space of a day; on whose next mood there could be no dependence, since she was swayed not merely by each passing event, but by every shifting picture of her imagination.

A golden-haired, laughter-loving Hebe was Liliās's chosen companion, Ada Hartop, with a frank, sympathetic smile that made her a general favourite. No one could do other than bless the sunny, happy face of Ada, whose light step, joyous voice, and glittering tresses seemed to steal upon the heart with the power of enchantment. However depressed in spirit you might be, the influence of her innocent gaiety was sure to cheer you; her presence was as destructive to melancholy as anything fresh and beautiful could be. She was not to be compared to Liliās in the brilliance

of her fascinations and talents, but she was a dear, sweet girl; one of the few in the world who might assume the name of fairy without any encroachment upon the rights of the "good people," for she was altogether as mischievous and lovable as the most famous of that famous tribe. Her friendship for Liliás (mingled with a reverence as profound as that entertained for a superior being, and unmarred by the faintest tinge of envy) was such as can exist only once in a lifetime, as enthralling, tantalizing, and exacting as first love, whose forerunner and likeness it is. It was passion, not esteem—adoration, not affection. The sublime trust and delightful sense of security of such youthful devotees to friendship resembles but the sweet and brief delusion of an early attachment,—the trust which knows no limit, the security which looks for no change, and dreams not of separation or treachery. And farther than the alternate moods of ecstasy and pain, common alike to young love and friendship, may the similitude be carried; as the former is frequently unrequited or not wholly reciprocated, so it is with the latter. Great as was Liliás's regard for her friend, it reached not that intensity of devotion which Ada showered upon her, or perhaps it had dwindled from its first exuberance; therefore she could ill comprehend the morbid jealousy that consumed the once lighthearted girl when she bestowed a look or word of interest upon another. Sometimes she would playfully chide her for the tyrannical watchfulness she exercised over her, but perceiving this served merely to deepen the wound, would afterwards caress the self-tormentor with wild fervour, bitterly upbraiding herself for exhibiting ingratitude to one she confessed deserved her love more than anybody.

"And is not your fondness for me greater than for any one else?" Ada inquired at the termination of a scene of reproach and protestation which had lately become of not unfrequent occurrence between them. "I love you more than I can ever love again. Why cannot I make myself to you what you are to me?"

Ada's blue eyes were fixed in painful suspense on Liliás as she concluded, and there was a fierceness in her aspect positively alarming in one usually so gentle and timid.

"I do love you dearly, most dearly, Ada," her friend replied, soothingly; "can you not be satisfied with this assurance? My father claims—"

"Do not speak of him," interrupted Ada, vehemently; "I know you do not care for him more than you do for me. Liliás, it is not *he* who has robbed me of your confidence. That your affection for me is sincere I am aware, but it is not what it used to be. How strangely you have changed of late! You avoid me now, and never ask for my company in your walks; and what can be the cause of all this but that your heart is weaned from me and given to another? Ah me!" she cried, her melodious tones made shrill by emotion, "I see it all now; it is not any of our companions who have come in between us and caused you to forget me, it is—"

"Hold ! what would you say ? " gasped Liliás, pale and trembling ; then taking Ada's passive fingers in her own, which were cold as ice, she added, " You cannot have reflected, or you would never venture giving expression to the words upon your lips ; pray be calm, and grieve yourself no more concerning such ridiculous fancies."

" I am quite calm now," returned Ada, with a constrained manner. " You cannot deceive me, Liliás ; I am right in my surmise, nor dare you deny it."

Miss Bellamy did not seek to do so, if she understood, as she seemed to do, her companion's half-speech ; but turning silently away, sought her own little room, where she shed many galling tears.

" I may merit your reproaches, Ada," she murmured, sadly, " still they are hard to bear ; for though you can no more claim the first place in my regard, you are very dear."

CHAPTER II.

LOST.

THE day was drawing to a close, the soft balmy air was redolent with the fragrant odours of roses, carnations, and wallflowers, which grew in rank profusion about the neglected garden of Sedgley. Sir Shenton Bellamy was reclining upon his accustomed outdoor seat, a rough bench that received support from an oak in the height of its glory. He was indolently watching the sea breaking into waves, which tumbled over one another like huge animals at sport. His present position commanded on the right a view of the beach, from whence the tide was fast receding ; while full in front the turreted roof of the Hall appeared between the thick foliage of the trees which sheltered it. To his left, within a few yards, lay the fish-pond, as calm and still as though no animal life existed there ; and behind him wound a broad avenue of stately sycamores, that with many a bend led into the high road.

The baronet continued staring abstractedly at the ocean, which, reflecting the brilliant rays of the setting sun, assumed the most variable and gorgeous colours,—now an ethereal blue, then an emerald green, which would in its turn change to a dusky purple or dazzling white. With unwearying energy he puffed his cigar, without for a long time observing that it emitted no smoke ; at length, removing his gaze from the gradually darkening waters, he saw the light was extinguished, and flung the " weed " into the lake.

" Liliás is now almost a woman," soliloquized Sir Shenton aloud, in pursuance of the train of thought he had been indulging for the last half-hour, " and it is not fitting she should remain any longer from home. To-morrow I will go to Blackheath and bring her away with me."

Thus speaking he rose, and, with a youthful buoyancy of step and a

happier expression upon his benevolent countenance than it often wore, went in the direction of the house.

Eight o'clock the following morning saw Sir Shenton sipping his chocolate in the pretty breakfast parlour, whose windows looked out upon the pasturage, where a goodly number of Durham cattle and Southdowns were quietly grazing.

The master of Sedgley Hall was never a late riser, and on this occasion had forsaken his bed with unusual alacrity, for he had some orders to give concerning his daughter's apartments before commencing his journey. The suite of rooms appropriated to Miss Bellamy's use (consisting of a spacious sleeping chamber, dressing-room, and boudoir) were to be newly furnished and decorated, and it was the baronet's intention to stay with Lillas at some watering-place while they were being renovated for her reception. The whole of the mansion had indeed been much neglected of late years, and not only did the ancient oak panelled rooms require re-varnishing and the elaborate cornices re-gilding, but nearly everything within and without the Hall demanded attention. Most of the trees even about the extensive grounds wanted the gardener's care, and some of them, torn up by the roots during the winter's tempests, yet encumbered the space. All save the sycamore walk bore marks of the servants' carelessness; that seemed ever fresh and new; and the reason of this was to be found in the fact that Sir Shenton confined his visits chiefly to this portion of his domain, made sacred alike from its perfect seclusion and the partiality the departed Inez had evinced for its solemn shade.

Breakfast had been removed, the baronet had despatched his orders, and just begun the perusal of a book to wile away what time remained before setting out, when a servant appeared with the morning paper and a letter.

The superscription of the latter was in a fine ladylike hand, that of Miss Magendie.

With an expression of irritation he tore it open, for he was disappointed that it was not from Lillas, and besides expected it to be merely a request that Miss Bellamy should have the advantage of some recently discovered study, whose principal recommendation would be its expense. The communication proved, however, to be more important than usually emanated from the accomplished understandings of the sister governesses, and ran thus :—

"DEAR SIR SHENTON,—It is our distressing duty to communicate to you that your daughter left Clardon House this morning without our knowledge, and has not since returned. We have made inquiries at Rose Cottage, but Mrs. King has seen nothing of her. Our dismay and grief, you, as her papa, alone can realize, for a more amiable and talented young lady it has never been our happy lot to be acquainted with. It is needless to say we are entirely at a loss to conjecture where she has gone,

or the cause of her flight, and beg of you to hasten to town immediately, unless (as we are inclined to believe) Miss Bellamy is now with you; for it is past our conception that a young lady, whose uniform propriety of conduct has hitherto been unsurpassable, should either stay anywhere without a protector, or, worse still, accept the protection of any one who has not her papa's entire confidence."

A few more remarks, consolatory and laudatory, and this terrifying epistle concluded.

"It cannot be," exclaimed Sir Shenton, almost wild with alarm and amazement; "I will not for a moment believe my Lilius capable of such shocking cruelty as to elope. She is too fond of me to inflict so severe a pang; and then, too, whom can she know? Pshaw! it is absurd to think of it; she could not act so ill, and the Misses Magendie are fools to hint at such a fearful alternative. Doubtless she is on her way here: however, if she comes, a telegram can easily be forwarded to me in London; and should she not, I shall then be in the best place to prosecute a search. I shall be in time for an earlier train than the one by which I proposed going," he continued, as he looked at his watch, and then rung to order his horse.

In a few moments the baronet, mounted upon his trusty nag, was galloping to the station as if life depended upon his haste, and getting into the first vacant carriage, he was rapidly whirled towards the metropolis. The time, notwithstanding, appeared wearisomely long in his excited state of mind, and he chafed sorely at the delay when the train stopped to take up or set down passengers, never thinking that their business might be equally important as his own.

Arrived at the London Bridge terminus, Sir Shenton, having crossed to the opposite platform, stepped into a train fortunately about to start for Blackheath. He was soon at his destination, a walk of a few hundred yards, after he had alighted, bringing into sight the superannuated poplars surrounding that modern temple of Minerva, Clardon House.

The distressed father made his way to the house without so much as bestowing one glance at the dust-covered tulips that, bordering the formal grass-plot on either side, looked to as much disadvantage as flowers possibly can. Having gained the entrance, he pulled so vigorously at the bell, that Miss Magendie's pupils with one accord jumped from their seats, while a thousand probable and improbable ideas connected with Lilius's unaccountable disappearance crowded to their excited brains. They felt convinced that this impatient visitor had something to do with the subject that had engrossed their thoughts from the dawn of the previous morning, when the discovery of their companion's absence had been made. An event of such importance and mystery, occurring within the very walls of the college, would have been enough of itself to rouse their restless minds into a complete ferment of romantic theorizing, and when in addition is considered the deep personal interest they felt for Miss

Bellamy, it is not suprising that her unknown fate should excite them to a feverish state of combined curiosity and apprehension.

Meanwhile, the unconscious cause of this agitation beguiled the few minutes he was kept waiting, by stamping his feet, and nervously twirling his fingers through his bushy whiskers. To his inquiry for Miss Magendie—the younger sister was rarely seen out of the schoolroom—he was informed by a youth, attired in livery of flaming yellow, that she was at home. Would he be pleased to walk in?

The baronet was shown into an apartment which had witnessed many a fond meeting between the father and daughter, and so violently was he affected by the recollection that he could scarcely refrain from tears. In less than five minutes Miss Magendie entered, as her visitor, with an attempt to conquer his emotion, was examining—or rather deluding himself into the notion that he was so doing—the various specimens of the young ladies' artistic talents, as displayed in the water-colour drawings adorning the walls.

A tall, dignified woman was Miss Magendie, with a quick bright eye and beaming smile, that caused you to be oblivious to the defects of a sallow complexion and spare figure. Cold-hearted she certainly was, but she had worldly wisdom enough to affect a love of her pupils, and to do her utmost to prevent them regretting so keenly the delights of home; and for the most part she succeeded in her efforts, for though of necessity there were a few too womanly and thoughtful to derive satisfaction from the simple projects planned for their common amusement, the majority were content to be pleased with everything, and did vast credit to the college by their serene exteriors. Of the number who felt a strong want of conversation superior to the trivialities current amongst them, Liliás might be classed as foremost. Her powers of reflection and research were too active and vigorous to be satisfied by other than intellectual communion, either with persons or books; and as all the sources of information open to her were immeasurably below what her soul panted for, it is not unnatural that she should for some time past have collapsed into a state of dejection, and entertained a growing distaste for the dull routine of school duties, which served to cramp her mind rather than unfold its treasures. In sober earnest Liliás had months ago overleaped the phase of schoolgirl; and the occupations, once so pleasant, became, as her understanding fully expanded, irksome as they were useless. She had acquired all that could be taught by the various masters at Clardon House, and it was with great, if disguised, impatience that she looked forward to her emancipation from the Misses Magendie's establishment, and her entrance into the vast school of trials and disappointments—the world. The system of education adopted by the Misses Magendie was undeniably good—as the ripeness of Liliás's knowledge in so comparatively limited a period afforded full proof,—but, as I have said, the moral training of their pupils was deplorably neglected. While every possible attention

was paid to their deportment and artificial graces, their religious culture was not even thought of, beyond attendance at church, and the reading of morning and evening prayers; the careful adherence to which regulations sprang not, however, from true piety, but were made to appear simply as a part of the form maintained at the establishment, and as having no reference to higher rule—divine precept. The least discerning of the girls could not fail to perceive that the governesses themselves looked upon these sacred observances rather as a duty they owed to public opinion than to God; and seeing this, was it fair to expect that their own zeal in the cause of religion should never become lukewarm? Alas, poor Liliás! the injudicious manner of your early training was followed up most woefully under the roof of your teachers, and if the balance of right does not remain steady with you, will it not be partly attributable to a superficial education, which cannot be too greatly deprecated when acting upon a temperament so accessible to false principles?

But I am straying from my subject, and am reminded by my “flapper” that I left Miss Magendie in the act of returning Sir Shenton’s bow. She was not quite sure who the gentleman was that awaited her; so advanced into the room with a genial smile illumining her whole visage, which, the instant she perceived the baronet, was clouded by a look of sorrow. She took his outstretched hand with a warm show of sympathy, and in a voice whose sadness was becoming the occasion said,—

“I presume, Sir Shenton”—she was upon her mental stilts, and gave out her words with formidable precision,—“I presume, Sir Shenton, from the anxiety depicted in your countenance, and the speed which you must have made in leaving Sussex after the receipt of my letter, that Miss Bellamy did not, as I trusted, repair to the Hall. She has not returned here, nor have we heard anything concerning her.”

Her auditor groaned aloud, but could not form any answer, and in a slightly relaxed strain the lady continued.

“You are really too eager, I think, to anticipate evil; had Miss Bellamy been differently educated I might certainly have feared, under the extraordinary circumstances of her disappearance, that she had committed the flagrant impropriety of eloping; but from the very correct manner in which her mind has been formed it is almost impossible—indeed, I may say quite so,” concluded the governess, sinking with graceful ease upon a seat.

“I am most happy that such is your opinion,” returned the baronet, who, although he would not allow himself to mention a suspicion so painful, was harassed by the remembrance of the allusion contained in Miss Magendie’s letter, in reference to the very point she now cast her doubts upon. She was not slow to detect the comfort her implied misbelief in Liliás’s wrong-doing gave her agitated auditor, and proceeded to extenuate the singular behaviour of her absent pupil, and hold out hopes

of her safety, not from any kindly feeling she entertained for either father or daughter, but simply because she desired to make herself agreeable to a man whom she knew by experience to be so generous ; moreover, for the reputation of the establishment it was incumbent upon her to deny, by the tone of her discourse, that Lilius had the smallest excuse for leaving on account of undue severity.

After many ineffectual attempts to stay the flow of the lady's eloquence, which he endured only because it was associated with his daughter, Sir Shenton availed himself of a slight pause to consult her as to the steps it would be most expedient for him to take in order to discover Lilius's whereabouts.

Gratified at this mark of his good opinion, Miss Magendie professed as profound an anxiety respecting the missing girl as if she felt towards her an attachment little short of a mother's, whereas she was incapable of caring seriously for aught but her own interest. Her advice was that advertisements should be inserted in the newspapers, and another visit paid to Mrs. King, who, she said, might since yesterday have gained some tidings of her young mistress.

Sir Shenton acknowledged the value of these suggestions, and being himself too confused to form the most simple plan, was proportionably grateful for her calm and ready counsel. He asked for pen and ink, that he might without delay prepare the advertisement, and the governess, with a sympathetic sigh, followed by an encouraging smile, left the room for writing materials.

No sooner was the baronet alone than evil presentiments crowded thickly upon him, effectually undoing the work of consolation Miss Magendie had begun, and he was soon absorbed in a fit of painful musing. A tremulous knock assailed the door while he was thus buried in thought, which was repeated a third time without attracting his attention. Succeeding this last application for admittance the latch was turned, and a young girl, whose pale and perturbed face showed her to be under the influence of excessive sorrow, appeared within the doorway. It was Ada Hartop who disturbed the privacy of Miss Magendie's visitor ; she had been nearly wild with grief since the mysterious disappearance of her friend, and was still too much a prey to anxiety to regard infringing a rule that debarred her the satisfaction of hearing anything relative to Lilius.

Sir Shenton rose hastily as the fair apparition greeted his sight, waiting with mute astonishment for her to speak.

A slight expression of hesitation flitted over the sweet, sad features of Ada, and it was with a great effort she collected herself sufficiently to address her inquiry to the baronet.

"I hope," she commenced, "you will pardon the rudeness of my intrusion, but understanding you to be Miss Bellamy's papa I could not permit you to depart without asking if she is well and in safety."

There was a perceptible quaver of the low voice as she pronounced the concluding words, and it was with infinite difficulty she suppressed the sobs which rose from her loving heart at the mention of Lilius; but she did prevent their escape, despite the correct interpretation she put upon the look which answered her eager question. The baronet replied in a few sentences, thanking the young girl for the interest she expressed for his daughter, and then unconsciously relapsed into reverie.

Ada respected his silence, and did not speak again for a few moments; when she did it was timidly, as if fearful of breaking in upon grief so sacred.

"I found," said she, "a ring in the garden directly Lilius's departure was discovered, and intended to keep it till she returned; but perhaps you would like to have it." As she spoke she took the ring from her pocket, and presented it to the baronet.

"If it would not be too great a sacrifice for you to make I should like it," he rejoined; adding to himself, "Dear Lily, it is something to possess what you have looked upon so lately. But"—in continuation to Ada—"she could not wear this upon her tiny finger; it is large enough for mine."

"Oh no; she never had it upon her hand, but round her neck, fastened to a chain: she prized it very highly, I know, and seemed jealous of any one even looking at it: I have only seen it a few times, and then by accident."

While Miss Hartop thus thoughtlessly prattled, Sir Shenton was curiously examining the trinket, and when she paused remarked that it was a queer thing for a girl to deem precious. And so it was; for though costly and unique, certainly it could not be called pretty, and even gentlemen who have a liking for massive rings might have objected to its size. The device was a serpent, with two glittering emeralds for eyes, and a diamond within its open fangs.

As Sir Shenton was still gazing at the jewel Miss Magendie reappeared. Her glance rested for an instant upon her pupil with an angry expression that foreboded a reprimand for her temerity; but Sir Shenton, stepping forward, explained the state of affairs, and his interposition had the effect of seemingly satisfying the governess, who resumed her suavity of manner, though secretly determining to give Ada a lecture upon the fatal example of insubordination she had given her companions by this violation of school discipline.

Having hurriedly addressed half a dozen copies of the advertisement he had drawn out to as many of the most widely circulating newspapers, the baronet took his departure, not without bestowing at parting a grateful look at the beautiful Ada, who, with moist eyes, watched from the window his retreating figure, feeling as if with him was banished every hope of reunion with her lost friend; and the moment he was out of sight, heedless of everything but her grief, she rushed out, the better to indulge her

distress in solitude. This exhibition of sensitiveness on her part gave additional offence to the flinty Miss Magendie, who saw in her unhappiness no proof of an amiable nature, but, on the contrary, a very vulgar display of emotion. A few gentle sighs and tears were all that the greatest calamity warranted in her estimation, and it is doubtful whether she would not have conceived the guilt of red and swollen eyes unpardonable for the accumulated deaths of a whole family.

Meanwhile Ada Hartop was outraging the laws of etiquette by sobbing with a violence that could not have been exceeded by a housemaid upon the desertion of her swain, the baronet was on his way to visit Sarah King. The nurse's cottage, although small, betokened in its whole aspect the superior taste of its owner; the little plot of ground at front boasted of not a few rare shrubs and flowers, while that at the back was made to do service as kitchen-garden and orchard.

A buxom, cherry-cheeked girl of about sixteen obeyed the baronet's summons (for Sarah was sufficiently well off to engage the assistance of a handmaid in her domestic toils, whose companionship besides made the time pass less drearily); but at the sound of his voice the nurse quickly came forward. Her countenance was pleasing and frank, though she could lay no claim to be called even good-looking; and as she greeted Sir Shenton with a low curtsy, a look almost expressive of terror darkened her face. Quite silently she stood before her master, waiting with tremulous impatience for him to commence. He came directly to the subject of his visit, asking if she had seen or heard from her mistress.

"Alas! no, your honour," ejaculated Sarah, in a faltering voice (adhering to her Hibernian mode of address when speaking to the baronet); "and it breaks my heart to say so, not merely for my own sake, to whom her beautiful face is more dear than anything in the world, but for yours too. It is an awful thing," she subjoined, more in soliloquy than to him — "it is an awful thing to lose what you have seen grow up in loveliness and goodness so many years."

Her hearer glanced at her with eyes almost wrathful, exclaiming, in a tone of conviction, "Lost! she is not lost. What could make you say anything so dreadful? My daughter is, I feel convinced, at home by this time, and perhaps as anxious on my account as I am upon hers. Yes, since she is not here she must be at the Hall," he cried, hopefully; then, after a pause, resumed to the nurse, "I did not mean to be harsh, but the fear you excited in me, and which I am assured is groundless, made me for a moment forgetful of your claims to my esteem, which your love and attention to my child have won."

The woman seemed to shrink as from a blow with every word, and as he concluded fell upon the ground at his feet with a subdued cry.

"You are too good," she said, when she could gain speech. "I do not deserve that you should think so well of me." Here Sarah stopped, her utterance impeded by sobs; and when she again proceeded, her tones

were dashed with yet deeper feeling, and something also of compunction.

"Have you not given me more proofs of kindness than any other master would have done for my care of Miss Lillas, and, better than all, permitted me to be near her when I could do nothing save pray for her happiness? Oh! never may you nor my sweet lady have cause to be sorry that you have trusted me. I would die to insure her welfare. You believe I would. Pray say you believe I would do nothing I thought was not for her good."

She stopped from sheer exhaustion, her eyes streaming with tears and raised imploringly to the baronet, who gazed at her with unqualified surprise, motioning her to rise.

"Your language is very strange. What is the meaning of all this?" he inquired.

"I cannot tell—nothing," she answered, confusedly, still retaining her position at his feet, her features marked by violent excitement, and her hands locked together with convulsive force.

"I am fully satisfied," observed her master, "that you would consult my daughter's benefit under any circumstances. If I did not entertain this conviction I should certainly not have placed such unbounded confidence in your discretion. It is for you to continue as worthy of it as hitherto."

"Thank you, thank you," returned King, assuming a more composed demeanour; and soon, completely altering her manner with her position, as though desirous of diverting his mind from her singular behaviour, she begged his honour would take some refreshment.

The baronet shook his head. "Not now, Sarah," said he; "another time possibly, when my daughter is with me;" and turning shortly to the door, with a hurried "good morning," he passed through the passage into the garden, the woman looking after him with combined regret and relief.

Sir Shenton had left strict injunctions with the housekeeper at Sedgley to acquaint him by telegram of her mistress's arrival the instant she reached the Hall, and bade her address it to the office of his solicitor, John Grinstone, Esq., Furnival's Inn. Thither he was now bent, and as fast as steam and horse power could carry him was conveyed to that region of attorneys.

Immediately upon entering the office he made the inquiry if a telegram was directed there to the initials "S. B.," and his trepidation was not unmarked by the slim, self-satisfied youth presiding at the desk, who, descending from his stool, turned into his employer's private room for the purpose of obtaining the desired information.

It seemed an age to the wretched parent till his return, yet in fact but a few minutes had elapsed from the time of his leaving and re-entering the apartment. He was followed closely by Mr. Grinstone, a man of what in another would be termed urbane exterior, but which in the lawyer

is best described by the substitute "oily." He was unworthy the distinction of being classed with the insinuating "Gammon," inasmuch as with him it was the look and accent only that were honeyed; the words themselves were chosen with more care for comprehensiveness than ornament, and were indebted for their persuasiveness to the expression of the speaker's face. How radiantly it shone at the sight of the baronet! you might say it reflected guineas; and with what delighted alacrity he turned over the heap of papers upon the table in search of a telegram! for as the baronet insisted upon it that there must be one, he made no attempt to prove the unlikeliness of its arrival without his knowledge.

When at length Sir Shenton allowed himself to believe the truth that Lilius had not gone to Sussex, he sank upon a chair completely prostrated by disappointment. With a polite manifestation of concern Mr. Grinstone inquired the cause of his distress, made patent enough by his sudden paleness; but either the unhappy gentleman conceived the notion that lawyers are not best calculated for sympathizers, or he was unable to give any answer, for he sat blankly staring at his questioner. Incapable as he was of assuaging his uneasiness, he retained just sufficient consciousness of what was due to appearances to catch at an open newspaper, and hold it as a shield from the lawyer's scrutiny, though for its contents, they were as far removed from his comprehension as if they had been written in the Chaldean language.

After sitting about a quarter of an hour, his gaze unconsciously bent upon the money article (which in his confused state looked no longer letters and figures, but rushing, seething waves, engulfing within them his darling Lilius), the baronet darted from the office as if pursued by a thousand fiends, leaving upon the acute mind of the attorney a strong suspicion of his sanity. On, on he went, he knew not nor cared whither, so that he might escape the terrible spectacle imagination conjured to his vision of his dying child. The idea that, in some temporary fit of wounded pride or morbid sadness, she had destroyed herself, took complete possession of his mind; even to the exclusion of his previous fear that, deceived by the allurements of sophistry and affection, she had been led to forsake the protecting shelter of Clardon House in favour of a lover.

It was some time ere the baronet relaxed his mad speed, half breathless with hurry and agitation. Now too surely convinced that Sarah King was entirely ignorant of his daughter's fate, and having outlived his last hope that she was at Sedgley, all fortitude forsook him. The burden of his wretchedness seemed too much for mortal strength to bear, and forgetful of all considerations beyond, he exclaimed, half aloud, "Oh, Lily, my child, the sweet relic of my lost Inez, what could induce you to forsake your fond father, and bequeath nothing but a memory to occupy his desolate heart?"

In addition to the advertisements, the bereaved parent availed himself

of every means for Liliās's recovery which his despair suggested. He made application to the officials of the Blackheath and London Bridge stations, and ordered bills to be circulated in all parts of the City describing her appearance, and offering a large reward for any reliable information respecting her. Numberless applicants for the promised bounty presented themselves from day to day, but their accounts were so confused and unsatisfactory that Sir Shenton was forced to believe, against his desire, in their complete ignorance of the fate of his missing child.

CHAPTER III.

A SUDDEN DEATH.

IN the drawing-room of a handsome house in Pall Mall—nearly two months from the date of Liliās's flight—two ladies were seated; one employed in the beautifully feminine art of wax flower making, and the other in cutting out and arranging sundry pieces of flannel and calico for a charity. The elder was about forty-four years of age; her features were strongly marked, and would have been truly handsome, but for the expression of distrust that ever lurked in them. There was a restless vigilance in her hazel eyes, harmonizing well with the resolute look of the thin, compressed lips, which parted frequently in a cynical smile, most destructive to the prepossessing qualities of her countenance. Without being thoroughly unamiable, she was eminently disagreeable: you always felt that her quick, suspicious glance could detect every latent foible or inconsistency in your character, and that, without being really malevolent, she would upon the first occasion disclose them to whomsoever happened to be near. It was as much in her nature to be distrustful and sarcastic as it is in dogs to be faithful. Yet, despite her harsh, inflexible temper, she was slightly given to romance, and I do not know but what it was as much from the love of the marvellous and exciting as a general dislike of her race, that led her to make out of every careless word or thoughtless act a world of intrigue and bad design. She never said anything that was not significant, and deemed it impossible for others to do so; thus in all that passed around her, however simple and harmless, she saw an under-current of deep purpose; and it was this habit of magnifying every trivial circumstance that made her so universally feared; for who is there likes to have his most innocent speech and unconscious looks converted into testimony of social conspiracy or harrowing remorse?

This lady was sister to the owner of the house, a man of considerable influence and wealth, and M.P. for the important town of Lilmouth. Her name was Hinda Lyttleton. The younger lady was the wife of Norman Lyttleton, and differed as much from Hinda, both in person and disposition, as possible. Small and delicate, she looked like a child in comparison with her husband's sister, who was exceedingly tall, and of an insufferably

haughty bearing. Mrs. Lyttleton was very quiet and gentle in manner, seldom speaking, and when she did, merely upon the plainest and homeliest subjects, for she lacked the confidence (or perhaps the will) to enter into a long conversation, feeling how uncongenial her sympathies were with the many. Nor did long intimacy remove this reserve, for more particularly did she shrink from discussion of any kind with her sister-in-law. Her parents died during her infancy, and until her marriage she had lived entirely with her guardian—a cousin of her father's—a man of few virtues, though of no prominent vices, and whose taciturnity and sternness bordered upon misanthropy. To him she had never dared disclose a thought, till at length, from being forced to confine her sentiments exclusively to her own breast, she contracted a habit of silence almost painful to behold in one so young, for she was now but twenty-three. She could not be termed affectionate,—there was not enough of passion in her composition to justify the application of the word; but she was tender and kind to all living things that came in her way, from the outcast child that in rags and tears besought her bounty, to the meanest reptile, which she would save from pain if in her power. Many have been the famished, hardened wretches who, in her mild and pitying presence, have forgotten to curse, and through the powerful influence of her unobtrusive charity and advice, been called to a sense of their wrongdoing, and led from the evil to the right path. Yet the husband of this estimable woman reproached her for want of feeling, and for the most part her acquaintances shrugged their shoulders when she was mentioned, saying she had no mind, was a queer creature, and quite a burthen to society. They complained of not being able to understand her; nor was it likely that beings wholly engrossed in the pursuit of worldly pleasures and empty pomp should appreciate qualities as unostentatious as they were valuable.

No word had passed between the two ladies, although they had been together for nearly an hour: the elder refrained from speaking because she considered it a superfluous act of goodness to attempt the entertainment of her sister-in-law; and the younger, in imitating her example, was actuated by the conviction that to talk would not conduce to friendliness. But even to the most self-absorbed and meditative persons, perfect quiet is sometimes irksome, especially when not alone, so Miss Lyttleton at last condescended to break the pause.

"Don't you think, Mary, that Norman's behaviour has been rather singular of late?" said she, raising her brown eyes from her work, and fixing them with Argus-like inquiry upon her companion's calm face.

"I can scarcely say," replied Mrs. Lyttleton, with a little stare of terror at her harsh interlocutor; "I have not remarked anything unusual in his manner."

"Really," sneered Miss Lyttleton, "I cannot compliment you upon your discernment. It would be well if you would use your eyes properly,

and not waste their light over that odious heap of work you are always engaged upon,—just as if it were expected of you to clothe all the poor of London; you might then learn something of importance to you. It is not for me to question him as to the manner in which he spends so great a part of his time away from home, but were I his wife I should not be satisfied with so small a share of his attention."

"I suppose he devotes as much time to home as his public duties will allow," returned Mary, timidly.

"Of course," rejoined Hinda, ironically—for instead of sparing the feelings of her brother's wife, she invariably treated her with an insolent air of superiority,—“you must maintain your reputation for artlessness and innocence. It could never enter your unsophisticated mind to fancy that he deserts those who should be so dear to him save for reasons the most important and praiseworthy. You have never, I dare say, heard of married men being wearied of their wives, and seeking in gayer society forgetfulness of home.”

"Hinda, what does your language imply?" cried the neglected wife, aroused from her usual apathy by the taunt conveyed in this speech. What would you have me do? Is it my fault if Norman has forsaken me, and wishes, as you say he does, to drown in other company the remembrance of the tie that binds me to him?"

"Yes, I affirm that it is, since it is in your power to wean him from what may not only destroy your content, but tarnish his honour," sternly answered Hinda. "He was always too strongly addicted to pleasure; and to be married to a woman who never smiles at his approach, nor evinces any appreciation of his society,—who is, in short, a perfect icicle of coldness, is enough to make him rush into scenes of novelty. If you could excite him to jealousy he would even have cause to thank you; but you who are never moved, whose life is still and unruffled as a stagnant pool, can no more stimulate passion in another than feel it yourself. The love Norman first entertained for you must have been a sickly, cold attachment. For your own sake as well as for his, you should strive to break the monotonous indifference of your intercourse, though it were even at the expense of his anger. Any sentiment in a partner is better than none, and the woman who can arouse her husband's jealousy is nearer to his regard than the one whose nature is so spiritless that she cannot dispel the listlessness her own insipidity has cast upon him. Left, as Norman was, to my sole care, could I do other than gratify his every fancy? Some say by my indulgence I spoilt him, but this I deny; it is the misfortune of being linked to a woman so apathetic as yourself that has undone him, and driven him to excesses. I point out the remedy at the same time I show you the evil. Will you not cast your habitual sloth of mind from you, and endeavour at least to welcome his appearance, and take an interest in his pursuits? If you will not do this on your own account, I implore you for his. He is all in all to me," she continued, in a softened

tone; "and if any calamity were to befall him, I am convinced I could not survive it."

Mary remained strangely passive during this torrent of words, which was poured forth in irritating accents of authority. She was accustomed frequently to listen to recriminations of almost similar violence, and no longer could they do more than bring a faint blush to her pale cheek, and deepen the gloom which rested like a pall upon her broad fair brow. Seeing, however, that some answer was expected from her, she said placidly, and without the least appearance of indignation for the reproaches heaped upon her,—

"Hinda, you judge me very severely. You think because I am undemonstrative, and do not court the notice and caresses of my husband, that I do not love him; but you are mistaken. I would lay down my life for his sake, though I know he would not give up one pleasure for mine. Since he is thus regardless of me, which you are fully aware of, why try to wake me from the calm that is my sole solace, to display an affection that would meet merely with repulse? You have remarked that his love for me could never have been strong; I feel it now, though at one time I thought differently. He likes unusual characters, and sad and quiet as mine was, it had at first more charms for him than those of a gayer and happier turn. Besides this, he thought me pretty, and beauty can always lure him. This I knew not then, or I would not have entrusted my life-long peace to the care of a man capable of being decoyed by a face of more than ordinary perfection. We had been married but a few months when I saw that he was growing tired of me; that his love wanted feeding continually with fond attentions and flattering words, and these I had not the power to call to my aid. Having from my earliest childhood associated chiefly with a man of so cold a temperament as my guardian, I taught myself to repress all feeling, and keep a check upon every impulse of joy or affection; for had I ventured to disclose the instinctive regard I entertained for my cousin, it would, I know too well, have been met, if not by positive harshness, at least in a manner which would have indicated it to be an infliction. You know I had neither sister nor friend to whom I might unburthen my sorrows, and for want of a recipient for my love I sought to annihilate sensibility, uproot every soft emotion, and look upon the world with indifference. As I was constitutionally of a calm nature, the task of steeling my soul to affection's alluring voice was not so difficult as may be imagined, and yet it was not accomplished without repeated struggles. So complete was the mastery I gradually gained over my heart, that when at last one came who professed love for me, I still felt the effects of the constraint I had so long imposed upon myself, and could not break the strong bond of habit. Even when I perceived that Norman had ceased to care for me I strove, instead of complaining, to conceal my anguish, receiving this cruel blow to my hopes as a fatality. I could

not seek to revive his decayed attachment by any of the winning arts that women differently educated from myself can use to such advantage. My only endeavour was to recover my lost serenity, and forget that I had known what it was to pass existence more pleasantly than I do at present. Should your fears respecting Norman prove just, still I cannot mention them to him; it would be of no avail; and, indeed, if it were otherwise, I could not summon the courage to demand from him an account of his actions."

The surprise Hinda felt at hearing the usually reticent Mrs. Lyttleton speak so freely, and at such length, may satisfactorily account for her not having interrupted her with some burst of impatience. It was a new thing for this arrogant woman to learn that the being she had been accustomed to look down upon with a pitying air of superiority, possessed a stronger spirit than her own; one which had succeeded in the mightiest effort of the will,—the victory over self. Yet the conviction that she had under-estimated her brother's submissive wife did not long awe her, and she broke out fiercely, "If you are thus determined, you must be prepared for the consequences; and I warn you, Mary, that they will not be light. You may affect to doubt the value of my warning, nevertheless, it is not without foundation. Listen, and I will give you information which will serve to substantiate the reasonableness of my apprehensions. Yesterday, in taking his handkerchief from his pocket, Norman drew out a portion of a letter with it; this he did not observe, but I fixed my eye upon it with the intention of securing it after his departure, for I had a presentiment that it was connected with the mysterious change which for the last few months I have observed in him; and besides, my suspicions were previously aroused by a circumstance which I forbore to communicate, till I had farther proof that he was concerned in some secret correspondence. One morning I entered the breakfast-room while he was reading a letter which evidently greatly affected him, judging from his expression; and when he had finished perusing it he pressed it with wild fervour to his lips. As you may imagine, I felt much interested, and drew near him in the hope that I might catch sight of the writing, but my movements startled him; he turned round with sudden anger, and hastily thrust the note out of sight. The embarrassment my unexpected presence gave him was not lost upon me, and from that time I have watched for an opportunity of satisfying myself regarding the singularity of his conduct. Fortune favoured me in the manner I have related, and though I immediately perceived that the letter which so unexpectedly came into my possession was not the one I had seen in his hands, still I trusted it would afford me the knowledge I desired; nor did I miscalculate. The note sufficed to confirm me in the belief *that you have a rival*. Ah, you start; I thought it unlikely that you should continue unmoved; even where a woman is indifferent to her husband she is not exempt from feelings of jealousy."

A dreadful change had manifested itself in Mary's countenance as she listened, almost stupefied, to Hinda's revelation.

Miss Lyttleton, regardless of her pallor, and the smothered groan which alone broke from her quivering lips, proceeded in the same cold, relentless tone she had used from the commencement,—

"The writing of the note was what many would pronounce beautiful, but that it was hurriedly written is quite clear; a tremor shows itself throughout: however, you shall see it." Saying this she rose, carefully arranged the wax flowers in a basket, and left the room, shortly returning with a piece of crumpled paper.

The graceful characters had been, as she surmised, penned by trembling fingers; they were here and there irregular, and blotted in one or two places, as though by tears.

Mary Lyttleton snatched the paper from her sister-in-law, so great was her anxiety to become acquainted with its contents. They were not such as to gratify curiosity, only sufficient to awaken it. The beginning had been torn off, and it commenced in the middle of a sentence; the name of the writer was also marked out so carefully that it was hopeless to attempt to decipher it. In its imperfect state the note ran thus:—

"—— need not fear that I should waver now. Important as the step is, I have given my promise to make it, and you should know me too well to imagine for a moment that I shall hesitate in its fulfilment. There is no trust I have not reposed in you, and can you still doubt me? Oh that it were safely over; for, though you would persuade me there is no need for self-reproach, I feel very guilty. Forgive me, Norman, for being desponding now, since when you are with me I forget everything which might warn me against the future, and remember only that you love me. Adieu, dearest, till you meet again your own ——."

When Mary had concluded reading, her sister-in-law demanded exultingly what she thought of it.

"What can I think?" moaned Mary. "Oh, miserable woman that I am!"

"Regrets alone won't serve you," rejoined Hinda. "Say, will you tamely submit to see your husband estranged from you by a creature who doubtless glories in the triumph she has achieved over you? Feels herself guilty, does she? Well she may."

"But," interposed Mrs. Lyttleton, even in this trying moment mercifully considerate, "it is possible there are extenuating circumstances that we know nothing of, and *she* can scarcely be the tempter."

Hinda stamped furiously, exclaiming, "Of what is this woman's heart made? to find excuses for her rival she must deeper criminate her husband! No, no; you may depend upon it he is the victim of a base design, and if you do not speedily set to work to dispel his infatuation, my poor brother's happiness will be completely ruined."

There was a dead pause for some moments ; Mary's emotion would not permit her the relief of words, and while she was ineffectually struggling to regain her composure, a confused sound as of opening and closing doors was heard beneath.

"Oh ! this is Norman ; do not allow him to witness your agitation, but endeavour to greet him with pleasure," said Hinda.

"I will try," Mrs. Lyttleton returned, faintly ; "too late I see my error, and——" Abruptly she paused to listen, for instead of the well-known footsteps of her husband, the heavy sound of many feet were heard, mingled with moans of distress.

Both stood for an instant as though spell-bound, their ears strained to catch the faintest noise, and their hearts beating with a dim sense of foreboding. The suspense was too great to bear, and Mary with rising alarm moved towards the door, with the intention of ascertaining what occasioned the unusual commotion. It was, however, opened from the outside while her hand was yet upon the lock, and a servant with disordered aspect staggered into the room.

Miss Lyttleton frowned at the intruder, despite her terror, curtly inquiring what he wanted.

"Mr. Lyttleton—Mr. Lyttleton—" stammered the man, his perturbation rendering his words almost inarticulate.

The ladies looked at each other aghast, but neither spoke ; the power of motion seemed to have deserted them. The wife was the first to recover from the shock ; she flew down-stairs, and, guided by the murmur of voices, proceeded towards a small room furnished as a study.

There were two or three rough-looking men leaning against the door. Mrs. Lyttleton brushed past them, and beheld a sight which cast her senseless upon the floor. Stretched upon a couch lay her husband, stiff and cold ; his eyes glazed, his jaw fallen, his pulse stilled. There was no mistaking the rigidity of his face—of a blue leaden shade—for aught but death. His sister came in just as one of the men was bearing the unconscious Mary away from the appalling scene. In unison with her nature, Hinda's grief was stormy and undisguised ; she could never learn that most difficult of tasks, the smothering of one's own anguish in order to bring healing to another's. Imperiously she motioned the men from the apartment, then locked the door upon them. She knew that Norman was dead, yet still she bared his breast, and placed her hand upon his heart, lately pulsating with all the vigour of life. In a very frenzy of sorrow she threw herself upon the lifeless form, kissing repeatedly the icy lips and marble brow, and calling for but one word, one smile.

"My brother ! my brother ! Oh that I had died before it became my lot to see you thus ! you are all I have ever loved," she cried, wildly addressing the corpse. "Why have you left me ? There was no one that cared for you as I did, not one. Your wife, oh ! her affection was a

weak, pitiful sentiment, while mine was an intense, unfading passion; and to think that I, your sister, should so lately have spoken ill of you, betraying your follies to her cool judgment!"

Thus the unhappy woman continued alternately to bewail her brother's loss and reproach herself; at length a new train of thought appeared to strike her, and rising abruptly to her feet, she exclaimed, "They will soon be here, the doctor and witnesses to depose as to the appearance of the body—the body," she repeated, with an hysterical cry; "to think that my idolized brother, my only friend, should in the prime of his youth, the glory of his career, be nothing but a soulless body! But stay; I must ascertain if he has any private letters about him, as, unless I possess myself of them, their contents may be blazoned to the world. Already I hear them at the door, I must be quick." With nimble fingers she emptied his pockets one after another. She had almost finished her search, still nothing of importance did she find, until she lighted upon a small piece of white paper, with but a single word written upon it. That one word, however, drew from her a scream of horror. "Great God!" she ejaculated, "it cannot be, it is impossible!" Choking her lamentations, she concealed the slip of paper in the bosom of her dress, and unfastened the door, at which the doctor had been loudly and repeatedly knocking.

With wonderful self-command Miss Lyttleton remained in the room, never showing by the slightest sign the torture she felt so acutely. The medical man called together the persons who had brought home Mr. Lyttleton, inquiring of them what they knew of the matter.

A cabman, the only witness who could give any important relation, said the gentleman had hailed his cab at the Mansion House, and ordered to be driven to his residence; that when he called to him for farther instructions as to the exact place he would like to be set down he received no answer, and after repeating his question, he got down from his seat, feeling alarmed at the gentleman's silence, which he fancied might be caused by illness. When he looked into the cab Mr. Lyttleton was leaning back lifeless. Upon this dreadful discovery he called a policeman, who immediately recognizing the unfortunate gentleman, accompanied his remains to his home. Having given due attention to this statement, the doctor declared that life had been extinct upwards of half an hour, consequently death must have followed directly Mr. Lyttleton entered the cab. Miss Lyttleton here anxiously inquired from the doctor the cause of her brother's awfully sudden death.

"Undoubtedly disease of the heart," was his reply.

Hinda seemed to breathe more freely as he pronounced this opinion, but an expression of overwhelming dread spread itself upon her countenance as he added, "Notwithstanding my conviction as to the occasion of Mr. Lyttleton's death, I must inform you that an inquest will be necessary; though of course in this case it will be little more than a matter of form."

Saying this the doctor took his departure, followed by the witnesses. Mrs. Lyttleton now entered the room ; her step was slow but firm, and her expression, though melancholy, calm. Her regret, like her love, lay deep buried within her breast, as a thing to brood over in secret, and carefully shield from vulgar sight. Her sister-in-law roughly pushed her from the corpse of her husband, and with concentrated fury requested her to leave him, at least in death, to one who truly loved him. Hinda's grief, which should have been as a bond between her and Mary, appeared to enrage her but more deeply against her meek relative.

Gentle under the most galling insults, Mrs. Lyttleton contented herself by saying that if Hinda would suffer her to spend a short time only with him in solitude, she would give up all farther claim to watch by him.

Without uttering a syllable in return, Miss Lyttleton retired, leaving the injured wife and dead husband alone together.

Mary's first impulse was to pray for Norman, not herself. She knew the custom was Papistical, but that signified not, it was instinctive in her to pray for the erring, and she was not now in a fit frame of mind to listen to reasons the most logical, feeling only the yearnings of her own sad heart to petition God's mercy for the soul newly transported to His presence.

CHAPTER IV.

REVERTING BACKWARDS AND LOOKING FORWARDS.

NORMAN LYTTLETON, when quite a child, was left to the sole guardianship of his only near relative, his sister, who from the great difference in their ages assumed towards him the character of a mother.

Of a naturally passionate temperament, Hinda showered the whole devotion of her soul upon her brother. Her adoration for him blinded her to every defect in his proud and fickle, though withal generous and affectionate, disposition ; and she would have thrown back with scorn any intimation touching the manifest imperfections of the being she considered so perfect. Not the slightest restraint did she suffer to be imposed upon his actions, and the result of her excessive indulgence was the growth of every bad principle, and the partial eradication of the better genius of his nature. He was so handsome that his fond sister was deluded into the belief that nought but good could dwell within a casket of such fair seeming ; in her eyes he was all that was good and great, a very miracle of beauty and amiability.

Heir to a distinguished name and great patrimony, there was nothing left for this light-hearted youth to wish for except to see the world ; and this desire was not long ungratified, for Hinda could not bear to see him, upon his return from college, wander restlessly from one room to another

of the rambling old house, when she knew that by consenting to his wish for travelling she could restore gaiety to his bosom and laughter to his lips.

So it was at last agreed, when Norman was about twenty-one years of age, that he should spend a year or two upon the Continent, on the condition—the only one his sister imposed—that he should not bring home a foreigner for his bride. To this proviso Norman gladly consented, smiling with the happy scepticism of the heart-whole at the fascinations of the blind god. The preparations for his departure were sorrowfully conducted by Hinda, but they were soon concluded, and then, after bidding her treasure farewell, Miss Lyttleton was left to offer up her prayers in solitude for his welfare.

The time passed quickly with Norman, and though with his sister it dragged its course most wearily, at length the period of his return arrived. He was changed only in few points; his form was more manly, his face was bronzed from exposure, and ornamented with a moustache, but beyond this he was not altered. He had contracted, it must be confessed, a greater love of pleasure than before, still Hinda saw no cause for alarm; he was as agreeable, courageous, and easy-tempered as ever, and besides, had brought no French mademoiselle or Spanish signora to his home, so she was perfectly satisfied. He soon mixed freely in society, and interested himself greatly in politics; he had therefore little time to devote to his sister. Hinda had wished—as doting mothers and sisters will do—that he might always continue with her, and this change in his habits at first occasioned her much grief; but eventually she became pacified, and reconciling herself to a state of things which appeared inevitable, she took apartments in London for the sake of being near her brother, who now determined upon residing entirely in the metropolis.

It was not in the gay assemblies he frequented so persistently that Norman Lyttleton met with the future partner of his life, but in a quiet suburban retreat, which he was induced to visit from a wish to escape the cares of the busy world. Certainly the distaste for excitement was not of long duration, nor did it often assail him, but like most people who see much of mankind, he was occasionally seized with a desire for leisure and retirement. From his first interview with the gentle and beautiful Mary Clifford, his heart became captive. That which the undisguised preference and seductive graces of courtly belles had been unable to accomplish, did Mary by the influence of her angelic sweetness and strangely alluring pensiveness achieve, without effort and without desire. She loved not the fascinating stranger, she only admired him; though when, after a few months' acquaintance, he declared, with a fervour that almost terrified her, that he loved but her, and should continue to do so till the end of his existence, a new feeling found birth within her, as bewildering to the lonely self-constrained girl as it was delightful; and for a brief space of time the change was so marked in her usually meditative mood,

that one could scarcely recognize in her the same being who had so shortly before moved about like a spirit, neither receiving observation nor bestowing it on anything.

It may easily be supposed that Hinda Lyttleton was not a consenting party to her brother's marriage, and that she strove by every means open to her to dissuade him from the step. He had given her an animated description of the placid, refined loveliness of his chosen bride; and dilated long and fondly upon her retiring manner that gave him such pleasure, by force of contrast to the flippancy he had often strongly deplored in some women. But his pleadings were of no avail, for where a woman was concerned, to attempt the softening of Hinda's heart was hopeless. The wedding passed off, therefore, without her, and perhaps all the better for her absence; and then Norman hurried his pretty Mary away with him to the Continent, expecting that in the novel society and brilliant amusements open to her there, she would lose somewhat of her natural and educational diffidence, and mingle with gratification to herself in the many delights thus offered her.

By an inconsistency not uncommon to certain minds, the very qualities which had invested Mary with so charming an interest in the maiden were displeasing to Mr. Lyttleton in the wife, and he would rebuke her, at first gently and then more seriously, with a neglect of their friends, and a want of animation. To all his strictures she replied merely by a silent tear; she could endure with patience, but had not the spirit to resent his injustice. The transient brightness that had illumined her life was speedily and for ever extinguished, and as the lightning's flash throws a radiance upon the profoundest gloom, while in departing it leaves the scene yet drearier than before, so did her brief happiness make the deep and settled melancholy that grew upon her soon after her marriage more remarkable and pitiful.

Her husband's attentions, with his affection, waned fast; he even ceased to consult her upon matters that intimately concerned herself, and without any intimation of his design, gave up their present establishment and returned in great haste to London. Arrived there, he applied himself with more assiduity to politics, obtained a seat in Parliament, and gave up the chief of his time to the debates and his club.

At the expiration of about six months from the Lyttletons' reappearance in London, Hinda—either from the exhaustion of her animosity, or from one of the secret motives she so liberally applied to others—visited her brother's wife for the first time, and when she had been in her company for five minutes was pleased to become patronizing in her manner towards her. Being satisfied that from so shy a creature no danger was to be apprehended either to her dominion over her brother or his household, she condescended so far as to take up her abode in Pall Mall with Mary, and to favour her daily with a quantity of superabundant advice appertaining to the management of her husband and domestics; and as Mrs.

Lyttleton stood the test with unwearied complacency, flatteringly submitting to all Hinda's dictates, she came to the conclusion that though Norman had married the silliest woman in England, she was certainly the most harmless and unselfish of living creatures. The malignant pleasure Miss Lyttleton had first experienced in witnessing the mortifying indifference to which the longsuffering Mary was subjected, at length changed to alarm; for from a trifling use of her prying faculties she discovered that if Norman did not love his wife, he was certainly not regardless of the tender sex, and particularly of a showy and fascinating lady of their acquaintance. His devotion to this charming fair was of a Platonic nature, but still Hinda feared for what might arise from it, and endeavoured, as the measure least fraught with destruction to her own influence over him, to reconcile him to his wife. In this, however, she did not succeed, and the flirtation which caused his sister such anxiety lasted until the lady's departure from town, greatly to the relief of both Hinda and Mary; the latter, though unused to complaining, being none the less painfully affected by her husband's delinquencies. An irritability of temper on Norman's part, and a wish for change, displayed themselves during the first week's absence of his inamorata, but subsequently all was calm as usual with him; and the two women whose happiness depended upon him flattered themselves that he had reformed: not so did it turn out, for in the manner already related by Miss Lyttleton, she discovered that a new dereliction was on the *tapis*. Enraged and grieved beyond all expression, Hinda again tried to make his wife his saviour from destruction, and knowing by experience the fruitlessness of her entreaties to her brother, she addressed herself to Mary, commanding and beseeching her to employ every art to regain her husband's affection. The result of this appeal to Mary's love for her husband is already known, and also that in the same hour Hinda was using taunt and menace to effect her purpose of restoring Norman to the duties of his home, he had ceased to breathe.

The inquest was held two days following the sudden decease of Mr. Lyttleton, and a verdict was pronounced in confirmation of what the doctor had at first conjectured, viz., that death resulted from disease of the heart. In three days more the remains of the accomplished and admired Norman were conveyed to their final resting-place.

The day was close and hot, and the tired horses panted painfully as they dragged their burthen up the steep ascent that led to the churchyard where the Lyttletons had been for centuries interred.

The July sun poured its rays unmercifully upon the family mansion (to which Mrs. Lyttleton and her sister-in-law repaired directly following the inquest), converting all the rooms on the west side into blazing furnaces. It was in vain that the Venetian shutters were closed to exclude the light, and the windows opened to their fullest extent to admit air; the atmosphere was, notwithstanding, oppressively warm and still.

Mary Lyttleton had taken herself to the most shady apartment she could find, desirous of being permitted to think in quietude over the fearful occurrence of the preceding week. She had witnessed the departure of the funeral *cortège*, and looked her last upon the lifeless form of her husband, and now unrestrainedly and alone she wished to recall the dear associations connected with him; to plunge deeply in the storehouse of the past for the consolation denied to her in the present. Not long was her privacy undisturbed; no sooner had she selected a seat in the least lighted corner of the room than Miss Lyttleton made her appearance.

This harsh, overbearing woman had changed very much in the last few days, and looked a mere skeleton in her flowing black robes; yet she had lost none of her habitual stateliness of carriage, nor had the suspicious glitter of her eyes been quenched by grief.

With a majestic wave of her thin hand she enforced silence on the part of her sister-in-law, who had risen at her entrance with an expression of displeasure at the interruption, as great as it was possible for one so inoffensive to assume.

No sign in Hinda's face denoted that she perceived how unwelcome was her visit; upon it was stamped an appearance of determination, as if she had made up her mind to a resolve of a forbidding character. Silently she placed a chair near Mary's, arranging herself deliberately upon it.

"I observe, Mary," she commenced, in a studiously measured voice, "that you seem to regard my presence as an intrusion, which I am much surprised at; but let that pass. I come to impart something important to you, which I must prepare you for as very alarming."

Hinda paused here to pass her handkerchief over her eyes, which were becoming misty with tears, and to gulp down the hysterical rising in her throat; then in the same modulated accents continued, "The jury, you will recollect, brought in the verdict of Norman's death as disease of the heart."

Mary motioned assent, for her amazement at hearing Hinda so coolly refer to the recent death of her brother impeded her utterance as much as did the anticipation of the evil she saw pending.

"But," resumed Hinda, with growing excitement, "my brother's death was not natural."

Her hearer screamed faintly, and pressed her hands over her eyes for an instant, as though to shut out some appalling sight. Then slowly uncovering her face, which was bloodless with fright, she turned to Miss Lyttleton with intense eagerness of expression.

Hinda seemed not to notice her emotion, and went on, "*Norman was poisoned*, and by his own hand. I knew this before the inquest, and trembled lest it should be discovered. Had it been, and upon his name have fallen the blight of suicide, I should never have been able to face the

world again. He was the last of the family; in him centred all my ambition, as well as my love; and for him to have taken his own life is fearful. I found the proof of what I now tell you upon him when he was brought in dead; it was ample, more than ample to satisfy me. In one of his pockets I lighted upon a piece of paper labelled with the word *strychnine*; a portion of the pale-hued powder yet clung to it, sufficient to testify to the deadly description of its contents."

"Hinda," interrupted Mary, in grating accents of alarm, "pray tell me no more; the horror of his loss is surely enough; and to know in addition that death was self-inflicted is more than I can bear, for I cannot but ask myself if I may not have been in a manner the occasion of this awful visitation."

Mrs. Lyttleton half fell from her chair as she uttered these words, shaking violently with uncontrollable anguish. Her sister-in-law gazed upon her with a pitying aspect, and gently raised the drooping form. A great change manifested itself for a moment in her stern countenance; she lost the expression of distrust and coldness which so marred her face, and looked really noble and kind; but it was only for a moment, and then her eyes flashed more fiercely, and her brow clouded visibly as she hissed forth rather than said, "No, Mary, it was not through you that the self-murder of Norman was committed, but through the writer of the letter I showed you upon the day of his death. I am convinced of this: not that I can give you my reasons; they are individually so vague that you would esteem them worthless, but to me they are undeniable evidence that his connection with that woman maddened him to the terrible deed. I know his proud, ungovernable nature was such that it would suffer no thwarting, and any deceit or unkindness on the part of the woman he loved, however unworthy she might be of his affection, would make him unmindful of everything but the wish for forgetfulness. He is gone, my darling brother, and yet I live; I thought if he should die, existence would be an impossibility, that all desire for life must end; but it is otherwise; a new object, as engrossing and as sweet as love, fills my soul, making my sluggish blood speed with youthful celerity through my veins, and my tired brain revolve again with exciting fancies. Would you hear, Mary, the name of this successor to despair? It is—**REVENGE.**"

She paused an instant, and a sob from Mrs. Lyttleton broke upon the solemn stillness.

"To be revenged upon the destroyer of my brother's happiness and life," continued Miss Lyttleton, with desperate energy, "will henceforth be the sole desire of my heart. It is true I do not know this woman, and have no clue to her discovery, yet still I hope; for should I be permitted to come in contact with her, I feel—I know, that I should be instinctively aware of her being the one I seek. The task my be difficult and long, but it is not completely unattainable, and if I meet with

her, I will, as I live, unmask her before the world, and proclaim her, should she be the loftiest or the meanest, as my brother's *murderess*."

Mary trembled, and, constrained by a species of fascination, continued to stare in silence at her sister-in-law, who in the intensity of her excitement had risen to her feet, and with clenched hands and fiery orbs was savagely glaring at her.

Wild and almost impossible of fulfilment as was Hinda's vow, Mary knew her character too fully to doubt that she would persist until death in the pursuit of her brother's supposed injurer, and thus an additional anxiety was placed to her lot, already so miserable.

MOUNT ETNA.

PERHAPS it will be as well to state in the beginning, that I had been staying at Paormina (the Greek Paorominium), for the purpose of making some studies of Mount Etna, as well as of the neighbouring antiquities, and at last resolved to attempt the ascent of the mountain.

It was at first proposed that we should start from Paormina at midnight, but the muleteer, who knew all about it, thought 22 o'clock better. 22 o'clock, I may explain, means two hours before sunset, 24 o'clock is sunset, and 1 o'clock the first hour of night. I say *we* started, because I took with me Francesco Strazzeri, the custode of the Antiquities of Paormina, a fine tough old fellow of sixty years, and whose burning ambition for forty years has been to reach the summit of Etna. So when he understood we were really to go, and that the day had at last arrived, he went at once into the seventh heaven, and I remained at Paormina until he returned to earth and became reasonable again.

The mule was decidedly shabby, and the saddle shabbier; it was dreadfully *infra dig.*, as the mule was a cart mule generally, and much galled by the harness. So I determined to make up for it by personal appearance and dignified behaviour, especially as the major part of the village were much interested in the departure of the expedition, and some very handsome young ladies were in the balconies looking on.

But the moment I put my foot into the stirrup and vaulted into the saddle, the mule resented the attack upon his dignity in a very unembarrassed manner, which proved him to be no novice in the amusement. As for myself, my dignity was nowhere in an instant, and I seized the mane with both hands vigorously as I had but one foot in the stirrup, and I did not feel at all sure of what was going to happen. When firmly seated, I thought I would remind him in the outset that such amusement was unbecoming in the society of his superiors, and spoke to him with a good switch. He instantly resumed his playfulness, but this time being prepared, I did not mind. Francesco, or, as he was called, Ciccio, had also made a good beginning. He had mounted his mule, which only had a sheepskin thrown over the "Bertola" or bag which carried our provisions, his little legs dangling down without any stirrups, a piece of rope round the mule's head instead of a bridle;—bits are things never heard of in these parts. This mule had evidently a domestic turn, and was of opinion that home was home, no matter how filthy and miserable; for no sooner was Ciccio perched upon his back than he took a sudden run into his stable, and the door being narrow and low, Ciccio was shot off posteriorly, to the serious damage of his knees and frontispiece.

However, these little affairs were soon righted, the mules being reasoned with in a somewhat forcible manner. We were off! followed by

the good wishes and admiration of the inhabitants. We were bound first to Nicolosi, the highest village on Mount Etna, where we were to rest, and then begin the ascent of the mountain. We travelled at a kind of fast slogging walk, the muleteer on foot keeping up at a trot by the side, generally assisting himself with the tail of Ciccio's mule. What a moonlight it was! throwing feathery shadows on the ground from the olive trees; making the shadows in the orange and lemon groves so pitchy dark; the sea glittered like embossed silver, and the great mountain looked black and terrible before us. I think Etna is one of the most impressive mountains to be seen in Europe: much higher mountains have not nearly so imposing an appearance, as they rise from the midst of others; Etna rises in solitary grandeur from the plain.

We had been on the road some three or four hours, when we came upon a field of water-melons, with the owner and his family asleep under a little basket-work screen, to protect them from the moon's light. How delicious they were on that sultry night! so cool, juicy, and refreshing.

We were now continually crossing streams of ancient lava, though distant more than thirty miles from the mountain,—lava whose date was thousands of years older than the human race. I think it was about this time that I began to experience some extraordinary sensations. The saddle was notched, and rough, and warped, and too small; and the mule indulged in his kicking propensities continually, and somehow I began to feel as though the mule was getting red-hot. It was odd, but *that* was just the sensation. I communicated my feelings to Ciccio, and the ill-bred fellow grinned. Yes, in the moonlight I distinctly saw him grin. I here began a little mental calculation:—If in ten miles the mule became red-hot, how hot would he get in twenty-four? (the distance to Nicolosi). Oh! I shuddered, and tried to imagine my appearance as a cinder. It was no good, I could not arrive at any conclusion, for no pyrometer yet invented would register so terrible a heat.

All at once the muleteer stopped and asked anxiously, "was I armed?" "Yes," I said, "I have a pistol; are the roads unsafe?" "Well," he said, "he didn't know, but perhaps it was best to be prepared;" and he took out his pistol and looked at the cap, and Ciccio did the same. We arrived at Nicolosi at dawn, and were lost in the difficulty of finding the *locanda* (inn) of Don Pietro Guschina Pudo, which was at last found across a heap of lava and over a field of black ash. It had every comfort the heart (Sicilian) could desire. There were two rooms, with broken pavement of tiles and broken whitewashed walls. I opened a door in the bedroom! in hope of finding something cleaner, but it only led into the stable, the fragrance of which, with the thermometer at several hundred, was somewhat oppressive. However, there was no remedy, and we turned into bed and slept until mid-day. Awakening with keen appetites, I despatched Ciccio for provisions, who soon returned with some beef, tender as india-rubber, and half as dear again as the best

London, some bread and some turnips. No cookery could be performed at the *locanda* because all the saucepans (earthenware) were broken. If we would only wait until the day after to-morrow, the man would come up from Catania with some new ones. This arrangement not meeting approval, the india-rubber was broiled on the tongs, and the turnips brought on as dessert, and very refreshing they were! There was horrible wine at fourpence a bottle.

Nicolosi is not a cheering town to look at. The streets are unpaved, and are of loose black craunching ash. The houses are built of black lava like coke; the inhabitants are miserably poor, and *seem* to be living entirely upon Hope, if any of that precious article still remains in this desolate region. Nicolosi is built over several other Nicolosis, all buried by the mountain, and it in its turn will itself be buried, and have another Nicolosi for its tombstone. At sunset we left for the crater, twenty miles of climbing. There were four of us—myself, Ciccio, muleteer, and guide. The commencement was disheartening in the extreme; loose cinders—craunch, craunch, craunch, slip, slip, craunch, craunch, slip; all black, solemn, and cheerless. No trees, no life—nothing! Our little procession at the outset seemed dispirited, and there was no talk. By-and-bye a rabbit started across the path; then arose a discussion as to what it could possibly live on. It seemed that in the clefts of the lava some weeds grew in the winter, and upon the dried stalks of these they lived.

We craunched upward for an hour or two, and the country became more fertile. A kind of broom grew, and a beautiful silvery thorn was there in great abundance. Craunch, craunch, craunch, we are approaching the forest, and pass many fine trees, and at last arrive at the real forest. What a strange sight in the moonlight! Immense trees (oak), some two yards in diameter of solid timber, calculated to be 1,500 years old, and some have been guessed at 2,000 years. But among them is another forest still more wonderful. "Was that a tree struck by lightning?" "Ah, no, Signore," says the guide, "that is not a tree, that is lava!" Ages ago, before these trees were acorns, the liquid stone came down from the mountain and lapped up round the trees which then grew here; the trees were burned, but left the lava in their exact shape. It seemed so impossible to believe that that was stone and not a hollow tree, that I jumped off the mule and examined it in the moonlight, and it was then more difficult of belief still. So I made Ciccio light the candle he had in his pocket, and even then I could scarcely believe it. There was the bark, the roots, and all the characteristics of an oak. But touch it, and you felt the truth. It was wonderful! One tree which had been prostrate lay there, a hollow tree of stone,—roots, branches, trunk, all perfect. There was a whole forest of these stone trees in the midst of the gigantic living ones. The brilliant moon broke in silver patches through the trees, and flickered on their trunks. Craunch, stumble, craunch, for another hour and a half, and we sighted the Casa del Bosco (the House in the Wood), where the mules

were to rest and eat barley. I was so stiff that I could hardly walk when I dismounted and entered the hovel, where I found four gentlemen of very dubious appearance. I never saw anything off the stage so well got up for robbers and cut-throats. They were all armed with guns, and some with pistols; they wore sandals and leather straps crossed and crossed up the legs. Their faces could only be described as villanous in the extreme. I saw the muleteer feel in his breast-pocket to see if his pistol was handy. Ciccio did the same, and a look of inquietude stole over his face. One of them came to me and civilly saluted me, and said it was a very lonely place. "Yes," I said, "so it is." "Nothing nearer than Nicolosi nine miles off." I said, "I knew it." "Was I armed?" "Yes." "Was it a pistol?" "Yes." "Was it a 'reverber'?" (revolver). "Yes, it was." "Would I show it him?" "No, I declined." "How many shots?" "Five." "Ah! now how wonderful the English were! Please let him have it only for a moment just to show his friends." "No, I positively declined; he might see it in my hand if he liked, but would not let it out of my hand." Here the guide gave me a look of approval. And he was fully satisfied that all the chambers were loaded and capped. He supposed I was a very good shot. "Middling," I said. "Would I aim at something to show him?" "No, I would not; but when I came down the mountain by daylight perhaps I would if he were there then." Then he turned to Ciccio and asked if *he* had a "reverber." Ciccio caught my eye and said, "Yes, just such another." It was not exactly the fact, but the inquisitive gentleman made no further inquiries.

When we were again in the saddle I questioned the guide about these gentlemen. He said he did not know much about them; he sometimes saw them about; they did not live at the Casa del Bosco; he did not know where they lived. "Were they honest?" Well, he did not know, but I did quite right not to let him touch the pistol. Whew!—he gave a whistle of relief. "Were persons ever robbed on the mountain?" "Well, yes, sometimes." "And killed?" "Ye-e-es" (hesitatingly), "but not just here, —over there," waving his hand to the left. After this the way got steeper, and we crouched up in silence for some time. I began to feel very sleepy and tired, and the air was biting cold. Poor old Ciccio evidently began to feel seedy; he put a pocket handkerchief over his head and under his cap; it drooped down round his face, and looked most ghostly in the moonlight.

The shooting stars were wonderfully brilliant, and the moon so clear and bright that every object was perfectly distinguishable. It began to be very desolate; and here we had to cross an immense field of black loose lava, like going over coke of all sizes. The mules laboured painfully, and this took all further kick out of mine; in fact, he was so distressed, that to relieve him I got off with the intention of walking some little time and giving him a rest, but ten minutes was all I was able to accomplish. The loose rolling lava, the ash, and the steep ascent, were most painful to overcome, and I was right glad to climb again into the uneasy saddle.

Having passed this the mules had a long rest, and the awful silence then struck me. In the most solitary places there is generally no perfect silence; even in the dead of the night there is some sound—a dog barking, some hum of human life, the buzz of insects, something to break the dead silence. But here not a sound; dead, dead silence, in the midst of an awful black solitude. The sound of my heart beating as I lay upon the black ash sounded like the dull, heavy beating of a sledge-hammer upon wood. Poor Ciccio, after a sup at the rum-bottle, curled himself up without a word. In half an hour we were again *en route*, as I particularly wished to see the sun rise from the summit. The grinding craunch was most painful as the mules toiled and toiled up. Now there arose an anxious conversation about the Casa Inglese, a hut built by Englishmen at the foot of the crater for the convenience of travellers making the ascent. Was it much further? Well, only another hour. Another hour! eternity seemed concentrated in that hour. We were all exhausted and at the last gasp. I ached and burned in every joint, my vertebra was on fire, my lips parched and cracked, the ash and cinders were in my eyes, grinding in my teeth, in my pockets, in my boots, down my back, everywhere; my hair was full of them.

The moon had sunk into the sea, and we had only starlight. It was bitterly cold, and we had now got among the snow, which was very hard and slippery. Climb, climb, slip, slip, toil, toil, toil! where was the Casa Inglese? should we ever arrive there?—blessed haven where we had been promised an hour's rest before attempting the crater. "You see that snow-field?" said the guide, pointing to a waste of snow before us. "Yes." "Well, it is on the other side of the snow in the black darkness; another quarter of an hour or so." My heart sunk within me; another quarter of an hour, another minute, was an agony! Just then Ciccio's mule stopped, and for a moment I saw a small pair of antique legs dangling in the air, and the poor old boy stood trembling on the snow. "Oh, Signore," said he, "non posso di piu" (I can hold out no longer). I jumped off the mule and went to him. He fell into my arms, and said, "I shall never see Paormina again!" "Nonsense!" said I, "come along, we'll have a fire in a few minutes." "Never for me," said he; "save yourself, it's all up with me. Oh, Signore!" he said, with a gasp. I called to the guide, and between us we carried him over the snow. In my fright about the poor old man my fatigue entirely vanished, and I trotted over the snow with him as though I had been quite fresh, and went blundering and staggering up the steps of the Casa Inglese. It was pitch-dark. We laid him on the floor; I felt half beside myself with anxiety about him; what should I say to his wife if I went back without him? "Strike a light," I shouted, "and make a fire." "Signore," said the guide, "there is no wood—nothing but damp straw." "Burn a chair," said I, "I will purchase more. Look sharp!" I roared, as he stood irresolute. An old ladder was found and pulled to pieces. I laid the old boy on some

straw and covered him over, pulled his shoes off, and smacked his feet hard to restore the circulation. His face was as white as paper, and he scarcely breathed. I lit my little spirit lamp, and in five minutes had a cup of hot coffee, which, tempered with rum, I got down his throat. He recovered a little, and after a bit began to talk, kissing my hand with Sicilian demonstrativeness. My fatigue now returned with renewed vigour, and I was thankful to lie down upon the dirty straw, while the guide set a cup of coffee brewing for me.

Casa Inglese—that long looked-for haven, which had promised so much happiness, and which, under existing circumstances, was as welcome as the most sumptuous palace—was not by any means a splendid building. It was built of black lava, and consisted of three rooms; and the floor was of damp, cold, black ash, like a blacksmith's shop. There was some damp straw, and three or four common chairs for furniture; no table, fireplace, or any other convenience. The roof was of coarse tiles, kept down by heavy masses of lava—a necessary precaution, or they would be blown away like bits of paper. One corner of the house had been shaken down by an earthquake a few years before.

We were a pretty company when we came to look at each other after a little rest. Ciccio lay upon the straw, covered over with a sack,—much better, but as white as a sheet; that is, as much as could be seen of him, for he was so dirty, and so liberally embellished with smuts, that little was visible. The muleteer flung himself upon the bare ash, and drank some grog with great gusto. The guide amused himself in a similar manner, with a bread and cheese accompaniment. We were all dirty, pallid, and with bloodshot eyes. I was forcibly reminded of the incandescent state of the mule when I sat down; but the hardest part of the business had yet to be done, and that was to climb the cone, which had to be done on foot, for no mule can stand there.

When the hour's rest had passed, the muleteer declined moving with great promptitude, saying that the finest sight in the world would not tempt him to walk one step further than was absolutely necessary; adding, mournfully, that he believed that neither he nor his mules would ever recover. Ciccio was strongly persuaded not to go, and for a time seemed content to stay with the muleteer; but all at once the old boy declared he would go if he died; he was not going to arrive at Casa Inglese without finishing the journey; so, as he was much recovered, I consented, and we started for the crater, leaving the muleteer stretched at full length by the fire.

To myself the ground seemed at first one black field of ash, and I could distinguish nothing but the immense cone standing dark in the starlit sky. All at once the guide called, "Look out, there are wolves!" I could see nothing at all; but he lit a candle, and showed me on the ground the fresh footprints of some animal. "We must go back to Casa Inglese," said he, "or they may attack the mules;" so we returned and

carefully fastened in the muleteer and his mules. When we were again *en route* I began to perceive that I was being treated in a very ungentleman-like manner. I could not remember having insulted anybody. I certainly had bullied and threatened the guide and the muleteer when Ciccio was ill; but they were used to it, and, in fact, will do nothing at all unless you make the most outrageous threats of killing them or breaking their limbs, and accompany these threats with the most ferocious expressions of face. As I said before, I felt the most ungentleman-like treatment was being observed towards me. My nose was repeatedly tweaked in the most insulting manner, and by some invisible agency; for I declare no hand but my own approached; and when I did touch it, it felt like a bit of ice.

On we crawled again, over ash, over snow, over rough rocks of lava, which tore one's boots to pieces, until at last the base of the cone was reached, and we then began the severest part of all. It was so steep that it was impossible to go up straight. It was all loose ash and little rolling lapilli, and we had to zigzag up, always ankle-deep, and slipping down occasionally two steps for one in advance. Many times I sat down, and believed I never should reach the top. Ciccio did the same. However, we *did* at last stand on the edge of the crater, and looked in. It was an immense abyss of, I should think, a mile and a half in circumference. The red fire worked, and hissed, and groaned within. The sulphurous vapour rushed out in jets and spirals. More than once we had to beat a retreat. The ground was burning hot, and seemed as though it would fall in every moment. It was split and rent in every direction, and scorching air and suffocating vapour rushed out at every fissure. I felt stunned and confused, and was half choked. I begged the guide to take me to some spot where I could sit down. At length he found a large stone which was tolerably cool, and burying my face in my hands, I tried to collect my thoughts.

There are moments in all our lives when we feel more than usually in the immediate presence of the great Creator of all things,—when we see the vivid lightning and hear the crash of the thunder; when we feel the solid rocks tremble with the dash of the angry ocean, or look upon the face of our dead child. And at this moment I felt the mighty Presence. I felt grateful that I had the power to see and to appreciate the sublime scene around me. I looked above into the starlit heaven, so pure and solemn; at the mountain beneath my feet; and then into the immense boiling, groaning, red-hot caldron at my side; and from that to the eternal ocean—cold, calm, and sublime. And as I gazed there arose out of it the morning star, so large and brilliant it looked like a flame, and threw a path of silvery light across the sea, like a miniature moon. Up, up it rose; and shortly a faint light spread upon the horizon, while the sky above became of the most intense ultramarine blue. The light spread gradually, and shortly was warmed by a faint flush of yellow, which soon

became stronger, and mingling with the cold blue of the sky became green. Up rose the star, and lighter came the sky. The horizon is now all orange, which deepens each moment. A little cloud, which was cold and gray, suddenly becomes gold and crimson. The country below is now indistinctly visible, and I can make out forests, cities, and plains. Lighter it gets each moment. The little clouds are crimson as rose-leaves. The sky becomes a flashing yellow diamond—it is a flashing white diamond. The blood-red sun rises in majesty from the ocean, and lo! the day is born;—but in all this island born only unto us three, for the shadow of night yet hangs over the cities, and dark mists are in the valleys. How wonderful is sunrise in any place! but here how doubly wonderful! We can perceive the other side of Italy, the Adriatic Sea. The foot of Italy lies like a map below.

The guide now tells us to make haste, and climb round to the other side of the crater. This is no easy matter, for it is hard rock and frightfully steep, torn and rent into fissures, and giving out volumes of hot sulphurous smoke; but with my iron-pointed pole I scramble over as fast as possible, and am well repaid for the trouble and danger; for there, sharp and clear in the rosy morning mists, I see another Etna, a gigantic purple mountain, with smoke coming out of the crater, and forests and cities on its sides. It is the shadow of the mighty mountain thrown upon the vapours of the earth by the rising sun. Looking at it attentively you perceive that the cities and forests are seen *through* it, though at first it seems unbelievable. It is but a vision, and shortly begins to pale and fade away, and soon it is no more: dead for to-day! to BE again to-morrow, and to-morrow, for millions of years, as it was before man was created. The effect of this upon the mind cannot be imagined or described. The brilliant purple mountain, so immense, so solid and real, set in the rosy, golden mists of morning—it is there! and as you stand in admiration it is going, going. It is not! and where it was is plain, forest, and sea. From this point one clearly sees that the whole island of Sicily is simply Mount Etna. Each mountain, ravine, or plain, has reference to the one great centre. The multitude of craters upon its sides is astounding. The guide says there are three hundred and forty, and I should not think this an exaggeration.

It was now time to return to the Casa Inglese, and we had a regular scramble down, and arrived quite exhausted and saturated with white ash, which, mingling with the black of the ascent, produced a pleasing effect. Our boots were nearly burned off our feet. We saw that the wolves had passed again during our absence, as our footsteps had the marks of their feet in them, and one could see the places where the animals had snuffed at the footprints.

We found the muleteer in a very anxious condition on account of our long absence. He had melted a quantity of snow in a tin pot, and the water bubbled cheerfully over the fire. Tea, coffee, and solids stopped a

conversation for a time, and we all stretched our weary limbs for an hour upon the straw and ash, as thankful for the comfort as though it had been a down bed in a palace. The hour fled, as all hours passed in happiness *do* fly, and we were again *en route*. It was a most desolate scene. There was nothing but lava, snow, and ash; not a blade of grass or a sign of life. There were many white bones of mules which had died with the fatigue of the ascent. Some skeletons were almost entire, looking daz-zlingly white in the midst of the black ash. They were all much gnawed by wolves.

The descent was not by the same route we had followed in ascending, as there were other wonders to see. We strode along vigorously over snow, ash, and lava, until we came to the edge of a tremendous precipice, and the wondrous "Valley del Bone" lay beneath us. The sight of this at first quite stunned me; I was so totally unprepared for it. If anybody had told me it was a valley in the moon I should have believed it, so much was it unlike anything I had ever seen before. As near as I can guess, without any data to go by, it is about ten miles long by eight broad. It seems to have been formed in some former age by the splitting of the mountain. The contents of this valley are so extraordinary that it is difficult to give a description, so much depends upon the effect upon the eye. When we arrived, a faint, very faint blue mist was in the lower part, and out of this arose gigantic rocks, like towns, like castles, like mountains, animals, birds; in short, like almost everything you could name;—one so like an enormous goat, three hundred yards long, that one almost expected to see the animal move. Many extinct craters rose up in different parts; some were formed of bright red earth. At our feet, several thousand feet below, were two large cones and several smaller ones, so perfectly conical that they seemed to have been turned in some gigantic lathe. The guide stated that in 1852 his father, with some others, stood where we now stand, when, without any warning, the earth opened, and fountains of fire shot into the air an immense height, and with a roar which almost frightened them to death. From these craters ran a river of molten lava, which reached the town of Zafferana, many miles below, and then providentially stopped, only damaging the houses on the outskirts. The floor of the valley is mostly of black ash and lava; in all the hollows the snow lay, looking like rivers and lakes of silver. We stayed as long as it was prudent gazing upon this wonderful scene, in which not a tree or blade of grass was visible; nor any living thing, not even a bird or an insect. We tramped away on foot, to give the mules as much relief as possible, as they were sorely distressed. After an hour or two the first sign of vegetation appeared, a little flower like a daisy, in the midst of the dry, hot, black ash. It looked such a beautiful, venturous little thing, to dare to live all alone in such a desert. We all stopped to look at it, and it seemed an age since we had seen a flower. I had not the heart to pluck it, and left it there, a beauteous star in that black solitude.

We crouched *down* now, often ankle-deep in ash, our boots full, grinding the skin off the feet. We had to stop every quarter of an hour to empty them.

Suddenly we came upon a vast chasm in the earth; I should think a hundred acres large, and two hundred feet deep. It sank from the surface in one night a few years since. The depths below were full of snow; and when somebody threw a stone in, two beautiful turtle-doves arose, and flew across. I wondered what could have brought them there. It seems they came for water from the melted snow. Scarcely had we left this when the guide, who stopped to explain something, sank suddenly into the earth beyond his hips. He soon scrambled out, and we all scampered away from such a neighbourhood as fast as possible, quite forgetting our fatigue.

We now began to get among some vegetation, and Ciccio, to empty his boots, seeing what appeared to be a mound of soft green herb, like fine grass, plumped down upon it, but immediately jumped up again, with a scream. Poor Ciccio! it was a most penetrating thorn. What made the matter worse was, that he had a few minutes before informed me in confidence that *his* mule had also become red-hot, and had even disturbed the molecular arrangement of the cuticle. Poor old boy, it was trying! The rectification of this mistake delayed us some time.

As the ash in the boots had become too great a nuisance, we mounted again, and crouched, crouched, crouched on. Although the descent occupied two hours less than the ascent, it seemed endless. Nicolosi, far below, always *was* far below, and all the trudging never seemed to bring us one step nearer. Monte Rosa, a great crater about two miles from Nicolosi, absolutely seemed to become more distant. Our friends at the Casa del Bosco had departed, and I cannot say that we, any of us, felt a great amount of distress at not seeing them again. The lava forest was as wonderful in the daylight as it had been in the moonlight, while the fresh green of the living oaks refreshed our eyes greatly. Mine had got into a most inflamed condition with the want of sleep, the ash, and the glare of the snow, and they burned like two hot balls of metal. Nothing particular occurred in the descent to Nicolosi, except that we all got very grumpy and snappish, myself particularly so; and the mules seemed not only to have their own wonderful heat, but also to have imbibed some volcanic caloric in addition, which was transmitted in rather an unpleasant manner. At least I speak from my own experience and Ciccio's dismal complainings.

Nicolosi was at length reached, and we made a brilliant procession of four scarecrows, as we rode, or rather crawled down the street of black ash.

Don Pudo welcomed us at his magnificent hotel. I did manage to get off my mule, but poor Ciccio was lifted off and carried in, his little legs dangling like those of a big doll. I was too knocked up to do anything but stagger to a bed and roll upon it, after telling Don P. to call

me in three hours. Oh, how delicious it was! Nobody knows the luxury contained in a sack stuffed with Indian corn husks, without being as fatigued as I was.

Those three hours were hours of terrestrial paradise. Being awakened I despatched Ciccio to make inquiries for a return carriage to Catania, and for provisions. He returned with some fish and a nice fresh salad of raw turnips and parsley, and the alarming news that no carriage was to be had, and there was no remedy but to take fresh mules. This was discouraging, as further mule-riding was likely to be a painful operation; and I am afraid I looked as uncomfortable as he did. However, being a little more accustomed to travelling than he was, I asked where he got the information. He said from the landlord. This explained all; the landlord had mules to let. So I said, "Go out quietly, without letting Pudo see you; get hold of the first idle fellow you see about, and tell him there is a bottle of wine for him if he finds a carriage in half an hour." He did so, and in half an hour we had the carriage for a quarter of what the mules would have cost. I say *carriage*; but if such a machine were to be seen in England one might almost exhibit it as a great curiosity. The body was like the car of the swings we see at country fairs. It was all disjointed, and the door would not shut, but was held to with a bit of rope and a nail. It had been painted bright yellow, but was now mended and patched all over with odd bits of wood, some painted and some not. The wheels were all odd, and I should think of different sizes. Two strong, rough little ponies, with harnesses of old pieces of leather and rope, drew this machine along, galloping over the rough road, with their shaggy manes in the air, and seeming to enjoy the fun greatly. The host was very sulky, and tried his hardest to cheat, but Ciccio was more than a match for him.

The road to Catania was most interesting, being the whole distance cut through beds of lava, which assumed the most amusing and fantastic shapes; sometimes like a lady in a flounced dress and crinoline, now a girls' school in procession, then a lion, a sportsman, two men in conversation, a boat full of sailors—in fact, each moment some new object, with so real an appearance, it was difficult not to believe them living.

Arriving late at Catania, fatigued as we were, imagine the sensation of not being able to find a bed in any hotel or *locanda*. For three hours two weary, dusty figures wandered about the city without success, and saw no remedy but to pass the night in the street or in a cab. However, at last we found a curious room containing six beds—through a cooper's shop and up a ladder. It was a low arched room like the crypt of a church, but was paradise under present circumstances. Two of the beds were occupied, and I scarcely knew what to do, when I suddenly thought of taking all the beds, and paying the two to go out, which I at last was successful in doing; and leaving the padrona of the establishment to introduce a little cleanliness into the arrangements, sallied out for supper and returning at midnight in the anticipation of a delightful repose, began to

undress ; but no such good fortune, for I had not been in the place ten minutes before a sergeant of gens d'arme walked in without knocking, and in a very important manner asked me for my passport. I gave it him, and he commenced in a very insolent and overbearing manner to ask many questions connected with my private affairs and history. I replied to them all with great patience and politeness, as I wanted most dreadfully to get to bed ; but the milder I was, the more insolent he grew. At last he asked me my name. I told him it was written in my passport. He then roared at me and demanded my name again. I told him. He said it was a "lie." I began to feel that I was getting angry, but kept tolerably cool externally. He looked at the passport again, and said it was an old one, and no use. I told him it was for my life if I lived to a hundred. He said, "It is a lie." I took it out of his hand, quietly folded it up, and said, "I must beg you to leave the room ; I have borne with your insolence long enough, and you have no right to intrude in my private room without any pretence whatever."

For a moment he stood perfectly aghast at my temerity, and then in a violent rage ordered me to dress myself, and come to the Questurer, for I was under arrest. I said, "I am much obliged for your polite attention, but I shall not come, and I order you to leave the room." I regret to say that this did not seem to have any soothing effect, for he became more furious than ever, and again in a voice of thunder ordered me to dress myself and go with him to the Questurer. I told him again that I declined his hospitality most positively, adding that he had made a great mistake, but that if he went away at once I should take no further notice of it, but that if he continued to annoy me I should certainly have him punished. However, he was much too stupid to listen to reason, and made use of some very offensive threats. I turned to Ciccio to tell him to pay attention to what was passing, as I might require him as a witness ; but when I caught sight of him I almost burst out laughing. He was as white as a sheet, and trembled in every limb as though he had the ague, and could only say, "Oh, Signore ! oh, Signore !" I suppose he imagined I should be led off to immediate execution. I begged him not to disturb himself in the least, and without noticing the sergeant, quietly undressed, got into bed, and again ordered him to leave the room. He then said he would take me, by force, and that his men were outside.

I sat up in bed, and said very impressively, "Don't you think you had better reflect a little before you allow your temper to carry you too far ? As it is, I certainly shall have you punished." He did seem to reflect a little, and then said he should send for his captain, but should keep me under arrest. I said, "You may send for the whole regiment if you like, but as I can only go out at that door, have the goodness to stay outside." He went out, but would not allow the door to be closed. I put out the lamp, and tried to go to sleep. After about three quarters of an

hour the captain entered, accompanied by a file of gens d'arme, cocked hats, guns, and fixed bayonets, all complete. Ground arms!—crash—attention. It looked very picturesque, and I felt very much obliged to them for taking all that trouble on my account; as for Ciccio, he almost gave up the ghost with fright,—and with some reason, for these men treat the Sicilians as a conquered nation, and the smallest opposition to their despotic will is sure to beget a host of false accusations against the unfortunate native, with the almost certainty of imprisonment; and they in their turn take their revenge with the dagger when the opportunity offers.

The captain, who was a gentleman, came up to the bedside, and said, "Signore, what is all this about?" I said, "That is the very thing that I particularly wish to know, and if you will be good enough to ask your man we may both gain the information." He turned to the sergeant, and from the very truthful account he gave of the affair, I felt very glad I was not a Sicilian. However, notwithstanding the embellishments he indulged in, he could not give the slightest reason for my arrest, and so the captain told him before he had half finished.

The captain turned to me, and very graciously informed me that I was liberated. "But," said I, "my dear sir, you do not suppose that I am going to be grossly insulted, and arrested in the dead of the night, without the smallest reason, and allow it to pass in this way?" "But, my dear sir," said he, "you are now liberated." "True," said I, "but English gentlemen do not submit to illegal arrest and insult quite so tamely; and to-morrow morning I shall take measures to obtain redress through my consul here." This was an entirely unexpected phase in the matter, and I saw the sergeant begin to look very uncomfortable, while Ciccio beamed with the most genial smiles. To cut a long story short, the sergeant went away in "trouble," and at last I went to sleep, which performance I prolonged until one o'clock the next day, and after breakfasting, slept again until five or half-past.

It was a lovely August evening, and the Spanish-looking town looked beautiful in the sunset and moonlight.

I was enjoying an ice outside a *café*, with that delicious sense of happiness one has after resting from great fatigue, enjoying also the delicious air which gently blew, neither too hot nor too cold, but *exactly* the temperature, when I heard the military band begin to sound in a piazza a short distance off. I finished my ice in a hurry, and went off to hear the music. There was a pretty orchestra erected in the open air, and a military band playing selections from the operas. But the people seemed restless and discontented, and called continually for "L'Inno, L'Inno" (The hymn, the hymn), meaning Garibaldi's Hymn. Of this the musicians took no notice whatever, but blew away lustily all sorts of selections. The noise increased until nothing but shouts, screams, and bellowings for "L'Inno" could be heard. At last the band left the orchestra amid

much hissing and whistling. Shortly the band of the National Guard made its appearance, entered the orchestra, and played the hymn. The people became very excited, applauded, cheered, and cried out loudly, "Viva Garibaldi! Roma o morte!" Then came a cry of "Fuori, fuori" (Out, out), and the musicians commenced to promenade the main street, playing the hymn amid the most deafening cries. As though by magic, every window in every house became illuminated, the inmates seizing anything in the shape of a light, moderator lamps, hand lamps, wax candles, tapers, anything which would burn. Garibaldi's Hymn seemed to drive them mad. I saw the mob enter a house, and, climbing over each other's backs like bees, take down a bust of Garibaldi from a high bracket. It was carried in front of the band, and in a short time was decorated with a chaplet of roses. Soon from every street and alley wild, excited figures were seen rushing to join the procession, with torches in their hands, flaming, smoking, and dropping lighted portions. The noise became deafening; I should think by this time a mass of from five to six hundred torches were flaming together, giving a most picturesque effect to the scene. Wherever the procession went the houses became illuminated immediately, and everybody lifted his hat as the bust passed. They went before the French Consulate, and hissed and yelled like demons, "Roma o morte! Roma o morte!" The torches waved high in the air, and the lighted pitch and rosin flew about on all sides. They went to the English Consulate, and Garibaldi's Hymn was drowned in the cries of "Viva l'Inghilterra!"

It was a city run stark mad. No damage was done of any sort whatever, except to the feelings of the Bourbons and priests, although the mob was in a most excited state. I was glad to escape from the dense crowd and go to bed, and next day I returned to Paormina.

THE GREAT COMPOSERS OF THE LAST CENTURY.

IN the September number of the *St. James's Magazine*, in an article on Music, we alluded to the superiority of the composers of the eighteenth above those of the nineteenth century. The eighteenth century produced a succession of unrivalled composers, of whom we shall now furnish our readers with a sketch. We shall first describe some of the lesser luminaries, and then unveil the stars of magnitude.

Let us commence with Dr. JOHN PEPUSCH, born at Berlin in 1667. His abilities, early discerned, procured for him employment at the Prussian Court. Being, as he conceived, arrogantly treated by Frederick I., he quitted Germany, and, travelling through Holland into England, arrived about 1700 in London, where, with little intermission, he resided till his demise. Pepusch is celebrated rather for his musical erudition than as a composer. He, however, wrote twelve cantatas, after the model of the elder Scarlatti, which at the time were highly applauded. They are now, in a great measure, buried in oblivion, with the exception of "Alexis," which may still be heard at concerts. He assisted in collecting the airs of the "Beggars' Opera," to which he has added admirable basses, as well as the overture. He had mostly employment at the theatres since his earliest engagement in Drury Lane orchestra. He was organist of the Duke of Chandos's chapel at Cannons, but resigned that office in favour of Handel. At first associated with him, we subsequently find Pepusch working in opposition to Handel, but wholly unable to compete with his gigantic adversary. Pepusch, however, had to struggle with a more formidable antagonist—poverty, from which, however, he was rescued by his marriage with Margherita de l'Epine, who brought him the handsome fortune of £10,000.

Henceforward Pepusch devoted himself undisturbed to his scientific studies, chiefly the music of the ancient Greeks. Assisted by a mathematical friend, De Moivre, he published a work on harmony, which still carries authority with the learned. Oxford conferred on Pepusch the honorary degree of Doctor of Music, and he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, to the "Transactions" of which he contributed a very elaborate paper, published in their forty-fourth volume. He was also one of the founders of the Academy of Ancient Music. He had previously projected something similar, though more visionary, being one of those who set out with Bishop Berkeley on his famous expedition to establish a college in the South Sea Islands. About thirteen years after his return from this unsuccessful undertaking he was chosen organist of the Charterhouse, and held the situation till the period of his death in 1752, at the age of eighty-five.

FRANCESCO DURANTE, born at Naples in 1693, was, like Pepusch, more illustrious as a teacher than composer. He long filled the mastership of

the *Conservatorio* of St. Onofrio in his native city, from which, under his tuition, issued a number of very superior musicians, amongst others Pergolesi and Piccini Durante. Not by any means a voluminous writer, he has bequeathed to posterity enough to render his fame indisputable. His "Duets" are to this day regarded on the Continent as most valuable auxiliaries to the studies of youthful composers.

BENEDETTO MARCELLO, born at Venice in 1686, of an aristocratic house, was a man of remarkable ability. He was a fertile composer, and so far a poet as to be able to write *librettos* for his own operas. He is chiefly known by his paraphrase on the fiftieth Psalm, a magnificent monument of learning and good taste. An edition of this (adapted to our prose translation), designed by Avison, was completed by Garth, of Durham. If Marcello's work has any fault, it is one from which Pergolesi, Mozart, and Beethoven are not free, namely, a vivacity and dramatic tinge inconsistent with the sobriety of ecclesiastical music. Possibly it was this which excited the displeasure of Burney, who considered Marcello an overrated man. To Burney's censure, however, may be opposed the commendation of Padre Martini, of Bologna, one of the most erudite masters of *counterpoint* of his own or any age. As an instance of Marcello's diversified talent we may mention his "*Teatro alla Moda*," an incomparable satire on the musical drama of the time, which might be perused with advantage by the modern managers of the opera.

NICOLO PORPORA, born at Naples in 1689, was a pupil of Alessandro Scarlatti, and has been surnamed the "patriarch of harmony." After residing for some time in Vienna, Venice, and Dresden, he, like so many others of his calling, made his way to London. He had been invited by some of the nobility who had quarrelled with Handel, chiefly about the price of admission to his theatre. Porpora brought Farinelli with him, but even with this attraction he was vanquished in the conflict. Disinclined for turmoil and bickering, Porpora returned to Germany through Italy. Sometime Master of the *Incurabili* Conservatory at Venice, he ultimately settled at Vienna, where he lived in very poor circumstances. The worry of penury did not materially abridge existence, as he died at Naples in 1767, at the age of eighty-two. Porpora, as a composer, conferred signal service on music by the impulse which his works gave to the development of *recitative*. He was not without excellence in melody, but cannot be acquitted of pedantry. Charles VI. persisted in his dislike of Porpora's music, chiefly on account of the prominence assigned to *trilled* notes. At the good-natured solicitation of the Hasse, the Emperor consented to be present at the performance of an oratorio by Porpora, who, acting on the hint of his friend, catered to the imperial taste. "Oh, this is quite another affair," exclaimed the King; "there are no trills." The concluding fugue, however, starting with four trilled notes, soon burst out into such a multitude of them that one would imagine an asylum of musical lunatics let loose upon the stage. The Emperor at last became

convulsed with laughter, as it is recorded, for the first time in his life. Porpora's prospects were improved by his wit, of which we may mention another instance. Being once asked his opinion concerning a performer on the organ, he replied, "Well, I think he's clever." "Yes," was the rejoinder, "and he is also possessed of a great charity and simplicity of character." "That he must be," said Porpora, "for his left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth." With skill as a composer Porpora united eminence as an instructor. Among his pupils may be reckoned Mingotti, Farinelli, Caparelli, and Haydn.

ADOLFO HASSE, born at Bergedorf, near Hamburg, in 1699, first came into notice from his fine tenor voice. His labours as a composer may be estimated from the fact that he set to music all the operas of Metastasio twice, and some of them three or four times, as well as many of those by Apostolo Teno. He also wrote fourteen oratorios, as well as a quantity of church and chamber music. The makers of librettos, as with Handel, could never keep pace with Hasse. His MSS., however, comprising a good part of his works, were burned during the siege of Berlin. Subsequently he removed to Dresden, where—assisted by his wife, the celebrated Faustina—he managed the opera with success and profit. The reverses of his patron, the King of Poland, compelled Hasse to relinquish the Dresden theatre. This plunged him from affluence into comparative indigence. He retired with Faustina to Venice, where both died the same year, 1783, the latter aged ninety and the former eighty-four. Hasse ranks high as a composer. Frederick II., himself a tolerable musician, on hearing Hasse's opera "*Armenio*," was so delighted that he rewarded the author with a diamond ring and a thousand dollars. This is in keeping with the judgment of Burney, who pronounced Hasse one of the most elegant, learned, and natural composers of the day. His well-known "*Te Deum*" and "*Requiem*" are both great works, and fully sustain Burney's criticism.

GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI, born near Naples in 1704, became afterwards a musical composer of the highest order. At an early age he discerned the music of the theatre to be distinguished rather for intricacy of harmony than beauty of melody. This imperfection he determined to alter, and may be said, as Purcell did for the English stage, to have created melody in the Italian opera. In effecting this reform he profited by the lessons received from his later preceptors, Vinci and Hasse. Pergolesi's works are enchanting, more especially his compositions for the Church. His music, delicious as it is, failed, however—being written in violation of prevalent tastes—to win applause. His "*Olimpiade*," a splendid work, first produced at Rome, was received contemptuously there. Pergolesi, stung with vexation, repaired to Naples, and turned his mind to sacred music. In this department his genius shone so conspicuously as to attract universal attention. A mass and vespers, composed here, were heard at Rome with infinite delight. But the tardy

triumph brought little joy to a dying man. Pergolesi had retired to Torre del Greco, at the foot of Vesuvius, in an incurable consumption. Here he ended his sorrowful career at the early age of thirty-three. Shortly before dissolution he composed the three most sublime of his works, any one of which would be enough to achieve imperishable fame. These were the "Orfeo e Euridice," the "Salve Regina," and the "Stabat Mater." In a constitution naturally infirm decay was hastened by the neglect with which his generation treated him.

After his demise, however, honours were heaped around his memory. Such is the history of unappreciated worth; those who scorn living greatness will scatter handfuls of flowers on its tomb! The "Olimpiade," brought out at Rome after Pergolesi's death, on a scale of unusual grandeur, was received with unbounded admiration. His "La Serva Padrona" (an *Intermezzo a due voci*) as a comic opera is not surpassed by even Rossini or Donizetti. It was produced at Paris, and elicited the enthusiasm of the entire city.

"La Serva Padrona" became a starting-point to the lyrical drama of France in its transition to that improved condition which it attained under Glück.

NICOLO JOMELLI, a fitting compeer with Pergolesi, was born at Aversa, near Naples, in 1714, and deservedly occupies a prominent position among the composers of the eighteenth century. At twenty-three he produced his first opera, "L'Errore Amorofo," which was speedily followed by "Odoardo." These elevated him to the pinnacle of fame, so that a few years subsequently we find him organist of St. Peter's, Rome. This post of honour he quitted for the Court of the Duke of Wurtemberg at Stutgard, where he remained, in constant employment, for twenty years. His long residence in Germany suggested to him improvements of the Italian method. The alteration in Jomelli's style was not, however, relished by his countrymen, who, when he returned amongst them, received his music with diminished satisfaction. His "Armida," reckoned the most refined of his operas, escaped, no doubt, censure; but not so his "Demofonte" and "Ifigenia in Aulide." Jomelli was so mortified by failure that he was seized with apoplexy. The disease did not at the time prove fatal, though he never shook off its effects, and expired about three years after, on August 28th, 1774, at the age of sixty-eight. Previously to death he composed the well-known "Miserere," which vies in sweetness and sublimity with Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater" and Mozart's "Requiem." He had already evinced his power in sacred music by the "La Passione," performed first at Rome, and the "Missa pro Defunctis," at Stutgard. We may measure Jomelli's capacity by the opinion of two of the best qualified critics of the day. Metastasio's early and unqualified admiration became the basis of a life-long friendship, and Padre Martini was loud in praise. Martini was once waited on by a young man who announced his desire of becoming a pupil of this incom-

parable teacher. The preceptor, with a view to compliance, assigned the stranger a subject for a fugue. The would-be disciple at once set to work, and Martini listened for some time, till at last, in utter astonishment, he exclaimed, "Who in the world are you? Why, it is you that ought to be teaching me." It was Jomelli, who, having his wish gratified, declared in after life that he was greatly indebted to Martini's instructions.

CHRISTOPHER GLÜCK, a most remarkable man, born in 1714, at Weidenwangen, Upper Palatinate, borders of Bohemia, exercised a powerful influence over the development of the musical drama. Left an orphan at a tender age, he had to struggle with difficulties which would have crushed spirits less elastic, but which vanished before industry, thrift, and perseverance. Through the force of irrepressible genius he acquired, unaided, a knowledge of music sufficient to bring in a scanty livelihood. Subsequently, however, becoming the *protégé* of an Austrian aristocrat, he was brought under the notice of Martini, who expanded Glück's musical knowledge, and laid the foundation of his future triumphs. Four years from this date he had so increased his reputation as to be solicited by Lord Middlesex to come over to England to compose for the opera. He yielded to the request, but arriving in London during a period of political disturbance his visit was not very profitable to any concerned. As Glück lived in daily dread—the alarm surely was groundless—of assassination, he seized the first opportunity of returning to Germany.

His sojourn in London, however, he admitted was serviceable in this respect, that the effort to accommodate his music to English habits impressed upon him the necessity of making nature the standard of composition. The observance of this invaluable rule conducted him into another, that of not sacrificing everything to the score. This induced him to secure good poetry for his *librettos*, and to provide music of corresponding excellence. The former he accomplished through the assistance of Calzabigi, a poet of no mean order. From Calzabigi's pen emanated three operas, which brought Glück a vast accession of honour, viz., the "Orfeo," "Armida," and "Alceste." His fame extended yearly, and culminated after his settling in Paris, at the age of sixty. Here his operas produced immense though not universal enthusiasm. Some were offended at his disregard of Italian models. Glück's adversaries soon discovered a favourite, the celebrated Piccini, who arrived in Paris about 1776. For three years fierce hostility prevailed between the combatants. No one escaped partisanship for one side or other. The sage and sober Marmontel, betrayed into the quarrel, and warmly espousing Piccini's cause, has furnished an account of the affair in his "Memoirs."

Glück, retiring from the conflict in 1789, repaired to Vienna, where he passed the remainder of his life in affluence and ease, though not appreciated to the full by his contemporaries; as, for instance, when Violetta's dancing (afterwards Mrs. Garrick), in the "La Caduta de' Giganti,"

educed more applause than the musical portion of it by Glück; yet upon the whole there was a fair recognition of his talents. Like Beethoven, Glück evinces intellectual vigour in his compositions, which are likewise highly emotional. He portrays both the delicate and fierce passions of the soul with a master hand. Some speak as if Glück's operas were a group of fugues, but this is not the judgment of one who was well acquainted with his compositions. "I find," says Rousseau of Glück, "that melody gushes from every pore." Rousseau was a captious but still competent critic. Considering his prejudice in favour of the Italian school, he is the more valuable as a witness to the merits of a musician of Germany.

JOHN SEBASTIAN BACH, one of the most illustrious names in the annals of music, was born at Eisenach, in 1685, where his father, John Ambrosius Bach, was metropolitan and Court musician. Sebastian's parents dying when he was young, the care of him devolved upon his elder brother, who, however, did not properly estimate the capacities of his *portégé*. The death of his brother kindled in the friendless Sebastian energy and self-reliance. He used to say in after years, when any inquired into the cause of his success, "I had nothing for it but exertion. Toil as assiduously as I did, and you'll get on as well." Actuated by such a spirit, and assisted by profound genius, Bach ultimately became unrivalled as a performer and composer.

His works are very numerous, and are mostly of a severe and chastened type, indicative of astonishing learning and subtlety. Most generally known is his "Well-tempered Clavier." This work should be studied by all ambitious of becoming acquainted with the structure of the higher music, or of attaining a good execution. It comprises two parts, *i.e.*, two sets of preludes and fugues (twenty-four each) in all the keys. Bach also composed several series of "Suites," and the famous "Art of Fugue." We have likewise from his pen a collection of grand preludes and fugues for the organ with an *obligato* pedal part. These have been in England adapted to the pianoforte, the pedal part being taken by a violoncello or contra-basso. Bach is the author of numerous oratorios, masses, and motets. In this department Bach's superiority consists in his correct realization of what ecclesiastical music ought to be. He adhered to the principle that all gaiety of movement and meretricious colouring interfere with the grandeur and solemnity of religious subjects. It is neither reverent nor artistic to superimpose the floriture of the theatre on the music of the church. Bach has avoided this, never once abandoning the pure ecclesiastical style.

Bach preserved great modesty and simplicity of character. He never courted notoriety, but preferred the happiness of home life to the most brilliant company. Once, after oft-renewed entreaties, he was prevailed on to pay a visit to Frederick II. His sojourn at Court gave occasion to one of the most scientific of his works, the "Musicalisches Opfer." Like

Handel, but at an earlier age, Bach became blind, and soon afterwards died, on July 30, 1750, in his 66th year. He was twice married, and had eleven sons and nine daughters. He amassed no fortune, but left behind him a name that never can sink into oblivion.

Besides the foregoing might be mentioned composers of minor celebrity. There appears, however, nothing respecting them to warrant a distinct notice. This is not the case with the four following musicians, Haydn, Mozart, Handel, and Beethoven. These are the blazing comets of the musical world, and so generally recognized as to need but a few words from us. Of Beethoven and Handel we have spoken with some minuteness in former numbers of the *St. James's Magazine*, so that at present we are only concerned with Haydn and Mozart.

JOSEPH HAYDN, of humble parentage, was born March 31st, 1732, at Rohrau, about forty miles from Vienna. His talents, as with Sebastian Bach, derived their earliest development at musical reunions held chiefly among members of the family. Haydn afterward received a first-rate, not only musical, but general education. His earliest teacher, Reüter, Chapel-master at Vienna, soon found the pupil outstripping the preceptor. Haydn possibly had suffered from Reüter's deficiencies, were it not for Fox's treatise on counterpoint, which he studied to some advantage. The crowning stroke was put by Porpora, who was at the time living in indigence at Vienna. It is worth recording how Haydn ingratiated himself with Porpora. Gaining acquaintance with the family where Porpora resided, Haydn took care early every morning to brush the veteran's coat, polish his shoes, and smooth his musty wig. Porpora first growled at the intruder, but his asperity soon softened, and ultimately melted into affection. He quickly discovered his lackey's abilities, and by the formative power of his instructions enabled Haydn to advance towards that maturity which he subsequently reached.

Haydn first established his reputation by his instrumental music. This attracted the notice of Prince Esterhazy, who, conceiving a strong admiration for Haydn, took him into his service, and liberated him from all anxiety as to future livelihood. Here, at Eisendstadt, in Hungary, Haydn enjoyed ample leisure for the labours of composition. These he assiduously pursued for thirty years, producing a profusion of works which brought him a large accession of fame but little profit. His powers had not, however, during this period culminated, since it was eight years after leaving the Prince's service that he composed the greatest of his works, "The Creation." This splendid emanation of genius is said to have been suggested by the performance which he heard in London of Handel's "Messiah." "The Creation" occupied Haydn two years, which seems a short time when we take into consideration its high elaboration and finish. One very striking feature in this masterpiece is its symbolism. The operations of nature are brought before us by the representative power of the music. Nor is there any inequality in the execu-

tion, the harmonies involving as much beauty as the melodies, and *vice versa*. The effort of the composer is perfectly balanced throughout, the concluding chorus being as rich and majestic as anything preceding it. Two years after "The Creation" appeared "The Seasons." This exquisite work does not reach the sublimity of its predecessor. Comparison, probably, is scarcely just where difference of subject requires difference of treatment. The orchestral part is very luxuriant, and illustrates forcibly the imitative function of instrumental music. The vocal score is characteristic, brilliant, and enlivening.

Beside these, Haydn composed 106 symphonies, 83 violin quartets, 60 pianoforte sonatas, 15 masses, 4 oratorios, with a *Te Deum* and *Stabat Mater*, 14 operas, 62 canzonets, and 200 concertos. His music may be pronounced expressive, refined, and exhilarating. A casket of diamonds emptied into the sunbeams figuratively depicts its varied brilliancy. After the publication of the "Seasons" Haydn's health began to give way, and about seven or eight years subsequently he breathed his last, on May 31st, 1809, aged seventy-eight years and two months. About three weeks before his death Vienna was first placed under siege by Napoleon, who—an evidence of the prevalent respect for Haydn—gave strict injunctions that his house and property should be unmolested. His dying moments were without the sweet consolations of domestic tenderness. Haydn, though married, early separated from his wife; the fault, however, lay almost entirely on his own side. He had no family, and his money, about 38,000 florins, was bequeathed chiefly to a blacksmith, and partly among his servants. He never admitted that he had received sufficient remuneration for his works, except in London. One engagement there, with Mr. Salomons, brought him in £2,000. This sum, remembering the work done, is, after all, not excessive when set beside the salaries of *artists* now-a-days. Up to the last he retained his great powers, and a piece finished a very short time before dissolution is in many respects superior to anything he ever wrote.

JOHANN CHRYSOSTOM WOLFGANG GOTTLIEB (or AMADEUS) MOZART, born at Salzburg, January 27th, 1756, may, all points considered, be regarded as the greatest musical genius of the eighteenth, or indeed any century. From earliest childhood he evinced an aptitude for the appreciation of harmonic combinations. While but four years old he could play several minuets on the piano, and twelve months after this essayed his skill in composition. Much about the same period, wonderful to relate, he could perform upon the violin. An instance of his progress may be mentioned. His father, along with two eminent musicians, was playing a piece for first and second violin and bass. Young Mozart, after listening for awhile, insisted on taking the second violin, and went through his part with the utmost accuracy. He could never have laid eyes on the music previously, as the composer who took the bass having but just completed the piece, had brought it to the elder Mozart to hear his judgment upon it.

Thus highly gifted, Mozart quickly attained a knowledge of the higher principles of his art; this he did at first apparently much more from intuition than study. Before the expiration of boyhood he performed on the grand organ of the Chapelle du Roi, at Versailles, in presence of the Court, and published his first two sonatas. From Paris he went to London, where he became the idol of aristocracy and people. Difficult pieces by Handel, Bach, and composers of the highest erudition set before him, he played with the most perfect ease at sight. Here he published six sonatas, which prove that he had turned to advantage his prolonged musical training. After three years' absence, during which his father tried the dangerous experiment of exhibiting his son as a prodigy, he returned to Salzburg. Here, happily for his future greatness, he entered on a still more severe course of study, and with such models as Hasse, Bach, Handel, and the more illustrious of the Italian school, soon made himself master of the science of composition. After such discipline, grounded on extraordinary natural powers, he was competent to encounter the most searching criticism. A single proof—a host in itself—will suffice on this point. At Bologna he became acquainted with Padre Martini, who was enraptured with the genius of Mozart.

Mozart now entered in right earnest on his glorious career, and produced his second opera, "Mithridate,"—the first, "Finta Semplice," having been written the preceding year, while scarcely thirteen. From this period onwards he laboured incessantly, and occasionally left Germany in quest of sustenance. After finally settling at Vienna in 1779, he gave to the world those incomparable operas, which elevate him far above all writers for the musical drama. The first on the list is "Idomeneo," reckoned by Mozart his best opera, probably from the romantic circumstance of its origin. Mozart was passionately attached to a girl whose parents forbade the marriage with a penniless musician. Mozart, under the pressure of an impulsive and sensitive nature, was determined to prove—and did so signally—that he had resources within him that could command more than a competence. After "Idomeneo" appeared successively "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" (The Escape from the Seraglio), in 1782; "Le Nozze di Figaro," 1786; "Don Giovanni," 1787; "Cosi fan Tutti," 1790; "Die Zauberflöte," 1791; and "La Clemenza di Tito," 1791. Beside these he had composed "Lucio Silla," "La Giardiniera," and the "Schauspiel-director." Of these it is not necessary to speak in detail; "Don Giovanni," the most widely known work, never has, and probably never will be surpassed. Many, no doubt, would transfer this judgment to the "Magic Flute," and artistically viewed perhaps it is, but the ethereal quality of the music excludes it from popular appreciation. The "Zauberflöte" bears the impress of being the offspring of a mind that had vanquished matter; indeed, Mozart was dying fast when he composed it. In this respect it bears affinity to the "Requiem," which he used to say he was writing, as the event proved, for his funeral.

Mozart seems to have been largely indebted to Glück. There is, however, in Mozart's instrumentation a richness and volume, and in his melody a smoothness and rotundity, peculiarly his own. His highly emotional nature imparted to his music a pathos and expressiveness which entrance the senses and dissolve the heart. He could always wield a potent sway over the passions of the soul. In originality—arising partly from physical organization—as regards harmony, ever fresh, curious, and captivating, Mozart perhaps stands alone. His faculty of invention—of the very highest order—was sustained by superlative power in realizing his musical conceptions. The workings of creature energy, too much for a delicate constitution, undermined his physical strength, and induced [those fainting fits which accelerated his dissolution. With all his endowments, Mozart lived neglected, and, by at least one infamous detractor, Salieri, depreciated. Poverty, likewise, laid upon him an iron grasp, and occasionally was embittered by ingratitude and treachery. The “Zauberflöte” is an instance. This charming opera brought him no pecuniary return whatever. It was lent, prior to publication, to a distressed professional, whom it rescued from bankruptcy. He repaid Mozart's disinterested kindness by having, contrary to promise, the score copied and disposed of to several managers, converting the proceeds to his own use. While every leading theatre in Europe was resounding with praise of the “Zauberflöte,” Mozart had to endure the aggravation to his sufferings of being knavishly shut out from profits so plentifully gathered by all except the unhappy author. Penury is a trying state under any circumstances, but intolerable when a man endures labour of brain to enrich others and impoverish himself. This, we may presume, was a principal ingredient in that poisoned chalice which, added to the consuming fire of genius, deposited Mozart in an early grave.

ACROSS ROSS-SHIRE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THREE WEEKS IN SKYE."

It was late on a summer evening when I got out at a small wayside station, and first set foot in Ross-shire; and it was not without some misgivings that I set out alone through the pine woods to reach the house of a friend whom I had not seen for years, and who did not know of my coming; for in the Highland tour that I had proposed for myself his house had only been put down as a place of call. Ten chances to one he should not be at home, and my only shelter for the night would, in that event, be the rafters of a small roadside inn, whose beds were reported to me by the station-master to be not over-clean, as they were chiefly slept in by Highland drovers, who not unfrequently left legacies behind them that were even more intolerable than sackcloth and ashes. "Setting a stout heart to a stey brae," however, as the Scotch say, I pushed on in the grey twilight, the very smell of the pine woods—which, to one who has been long "in populous city pent," is peculiarly delightful—imparting a grateful strength to me as I passed along; while the deep gloom of the landscape, which brought into nobler relief the grandeur of the mountains, the pellucid tranquillity of the marsh pools, and the sombreness of the dark fir woods, braced my nerves to a point which I found to be strangely inspiring, if not positively thrilling. I was, besides, uncertain of the safety of the road, and with sundry traditions floating in my mind of the days in which "black-mail" was levied on every passing traveller, blended with recollections of ghostly legends and things supernatural, it was with a quickened pulse that I observed one or two gaunt Highland figures pass me on the road, and with voice somewhat shaky that I replied to their Gaelic or broken English salutations. No one offered to throttle or rob me, however, and after some difficulty in finding my friend's residence, owing to the paucity of dwelling-houses, and the equal scarcity of fellow-travellers, I knocked at his door between nine and ten, and learnt with joy that he was at home.

In the dim light of the room, and because of my altered looks, he did not recognize me, taking me, as he afterwards jocularly said, for an untimely colporteur. But the voice which I had purposely withheld, knowing its detective fatality, betrayed me. "The voice was Jacob's voice," though he had not heard it for a dozen years, and midnight found us recounting incidents of our college life with eager-eyed interest. When at length I retired to rest I could not sleep, the memory of former days flooding back on me, and the hushed stillness of the large chamber (the Blue Room had fallen to my lot) being something unusual to one accustomed to the din of a great city. I might lie awake thus perhaps for the better part of an hour, when I was conscious of a dim ethereal light beginning to permeate the chamber, and the same feeling of awe crept over me that

I had experienced on waiting breathlessly for the entrance of Pepper's ghost at the Polytechnic. Certain hollow sounds, common enough from the walls of old country houses, helped to fill my cup of horror to the brim, and how long I lay in dread expectancy I cannot say, but of one thing I was clearly conscious, that the tide of unearthly light that was creeping stealthily into the apartment was every moment increasing in breadth and fullness. I raised myself on my elbow at last, and ventured to look round the room. There was nothing to be seen at all resembling a disembodied spirit, and the light was clearly coming from the window. I arose and pulled the blind aside, and lo! a thin, ghost-like mist hung over the distant river; the firmament returned a glow of light, over one part of it being spread a gauze-like drapery, resembling the finest satin; far-off mountains were distinctly seen, robed in a clear blue, and every object in the landscape was sharply and weirdly defined. I looked at my watch and wondered;—but a few minutes after one o'clock, and no moon besides. Yet it was all perfectly natural, for I was only beholding for the first time a sight worth going five hundred miles to see, the long northern twilight succeeding a night whose duration had certainly not exceeded a couple of hours.

Next to the sombre gloom of the pine woods, this brief northern night certainly riveted itself in my mind most strongly.

After remaining a day or two, and seeing the chief objects of interest in the neighbourhood—which, though extremely attractive, do not fall within the scope of this paper,—I set out, in company with my friend, who had kindly volunteered to join me, upon the route which gives a title to the present sketch. Our point of departure was Dingwall, the county town, with the situation and appearance of which I was much struck,—the county buildings, the National Hotel, and the pretty villas, some of them embosomed in trees, and one or two half smothered in ivy, at once arresting the eye as a fine combination; while the sloping braes of Tulloch behind, the long, sparkling Frith of Cromarty to the north-east, stretching to the Hill of Nigg, and the grand headlands of the Sutors in the dim distance, together with the yellow slopes of Ferintosh to the right, formed a background of singular beauty.

But Dingwall is worth staying a night in, if the tourist have only one to spare, not alone for the scenery about it, but for its own sake. There, on a summer's day, may be seen the gaiety of Inverness in miniature; the colours as bright, and the picture, on the whole, quite as pleasing;—English tourists in knickerbockers, brown as Hindoos, from a lengthened exposure to the sun; neighbouring lairds; a baronet, perchance, or a chief of a clan, clad in the picturesque costume of his Keltic forefathers; retired military men, stiff with rheumatism, or gross from habitual indulgence in the good things of the table; pretty maidens fresh from the moors, in pork-pie hats and crinoline now, but two days ago in glengarries and knickerbockers perhaps, stalking deer or bagging grouse “amang

the bonnie blooming heather." A perfect stream of tourists seems to flow through the place from June till October, on their way to the west coast, or to Strathpeffer Spa, which is known over the wide world, and resorted to by Yankees, South Americans, East and West Indians, and Europeans alike.

I enjoyed the day or two that I spent in Dingwall very much, walking down to the harbour to have a whiff of the sea air, and the scent of the pine wood, and "caller herrin'" from the sloops that were loading and unloading at the little wharf; and taking a stroll to the top of the wooded knoll behind the town, on which we rested our limbs for half an hour, enjoying in dreamy ease the varied landscape before us:—Tulloch Castle, peeping from amidst the oaks of its magnificent policies; the broad expanse of Cromarty Frith (in Gaelic the "Crooked Bay"), which, fit emblem of an even mind, is said to maintain a comparative smoothness in all weathers, though the billows of the outer ocean may be dashing in foam on the headlands of the Sutors at its mouth; the sweet and rich vale of Strathpeffer to the left, with its sloping uplands, green hedgerows, and ripening corn-fields; while immediately below lies the town itself, with its long main thoroughfare, and its lateral streets and lanes branching off at right angles in pleasing regularity; with its ancient town-house and quaint belfry, "old and brown;" its grey and time-worn obelisk, rent by lightning, and, like the leaning tower of Pisa, a little off the straight, standing on the green slopes behind the church, and erected to the memory of a distinguished Earl of Cromarty. Lastly, I must not fail to notice the poplar trees, which, scattered in and around the town, give it an extremely picturesque aspect, similar to what one sees in the sweet villages in the south of England. I was informed, too, though I cannot personally vouch for the fact, that the town was once—nay, is still, famous for the growth of cabbages, and that its ancient name was Baile à Chaille (Kale Town), the modern name being Danish, and signifying Seat of Justice, a dignity which the town has enjoyed perhaps for a thousand years. Tingwall, in the Shetland Isles, and Tynewald, or Tingwall, in the Isle of Man, have the same origin, to which may also be referred the numerous "walds," as in Torthorwald, that are to be met with in the south of Scotland.

In connection with Dingwall an interesting fact was mentioned to me regarding the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. It seems that Mr. Gladstone spent a good portion of his youth in Dingwall or its neighbourhood, his grandmother having been a daughter of Provost Robertson, of that town, and it is said that while staying with his relatives there, he was one day asked by a guest who chanced to be dining with them, what profession he meant to choose, or, as the words ran, what he intended to be. "What am I to be?" replied the plucky youth, "why, sir, I shall be Prime Minister of England." It requires no great forethought to see that the prediction will, in all human probability, soon be fulfilled. If the tide

of reform that has just set in prove too strong for the Government of Lord Derby, there is no head likely to be higher on the crest of the wave than that of William Gladstone.

Dropping into the parish church while the Presbytery was sitting, I had the good fortune to witness the interesting ceremony of licensing a student to preach the gospel of Christ; the flushed and trembling candidate, who was stuck into the precentor's box, the members of Presbytery occupying the benches below, being on this great occasion called upon to give a specimen of an exegesis, a lecture, and a sermon, all of which commodities were tested pretty much as men test a cheese, samples being selected here and there, and the rest taken for granted. After this sermon-tasting there was a stiff examination in Church history and theology, which was varied by a pleasant little interlude in the form of an animated discussion among the members themselves anent the precise moment at which regeneration begins in the awakened sinner, about which there was a slight difference of opinion. The meeting was concluded by an impressive address from the moderator, one of whose remarks still clings to my memory :—"Though most men look, night by night, on the quiet heavens above their heads, and feel little or no reverence in their hearts, yet few," he added, seriously, "would fail to notice and comment upon the phenomenon of a falling star."

While on this ecclesiastical subject it may not be uninteresting to mention, that as a rule, to which Dingwall is an agreeable exception, the Established Churches of Ross-shire are very thinly attended, the hearers being reckonable, not by hundreds, but in dozens; while the Free Churches are full to the door, and on sacramental occasions overflow upon the neighbouring moors or commons. Ross-shire is thus, in a measure, lost to the Established Church, and is likely to remain so, as the mass of the people are said to be completely under the thumbs of their pastors, who openly debar them from darkening the doors of an Established church, or sending their children to an Established school. This is a great hardship in a poor community, to which, above all others, the Establishment is a boon, the calls that are made upon it for the support of the Free Church being incessant and grievous. The fiery vehemence of the Free Church preachers, too, against their brethren in the Lord is something noteworthy, and specimens are to be had in abundance. Without quoting spoken words, let me refer the reader to a work called "The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire," by the Free Church clergyman of Dingwall, in which his enemies, the Established or moderate pastors, are characterized mildly as "the stipend-lifters of Ross-shire; men whose chief work consists in pocketing their funds and spending them, and who will beg, borrow, or steal a sermon rather than write one." Surely the difference between New Presbyter and Old Priest is a homœopathic quantity in Ross-shire.

Dingwall has been selected as the starting-point of the Skye Railway, which will run as nearly as possible along the route which is to be

described in the following pages, and which stretches from sea to sea, from Cromarty Frith to Kyleakin, a distance of seventy miles. The route is also that now traversed by H.M.'s mail gig, which leaves the National Hotel door every lawful morning in summer, and three times a week in winter, so that the tourist may alternate walking with coaching, as we did, at any point of the journey he may choose. With a companion, walking is much preferable, provided that both be of Ruskin's opinion, that to see everything well twelve miles a day are quite sufficient. How delightful it is to rise with the lark, and get out while the dew is yet glistening on the grass, taking a long rest in the heat of the day, and setting out again in the cool of the evening for the first stage!

Leaving Dingwall the road trends westward, following the course of the little stream which gives its name to the Strath. "Grassy burn" the word means, from the Gaelic "feur," grass. Among the last houses that skirt the highway is that of the sheriff's—who, by the way, is a Glasgow man, son of Professor Hill, who for a quarter of a century occupied the chair of divinity in the university of that city—a seat now filled by the Scottish Spurgeon, Dr. Caird. A sweet little mill, with its flour-dusted walls, broad dam, and melodious hum, suggestive of the sweetest mill in English literature, the ever-memorable "Mill on the Floss," arrested my gaze just beyond, and somehow I waited longingly, if perchance a Maggie Tulliver, with her hair over her brow, after the fashion of a Shetland pony, might come to the door, and, shading her eyes from the morning sun, have a look at the passing travellers. Passing next a pretty little red sandstone tollhouse, beyond which is a side road leading to Tulloch Castle, we came out into the open valley, which is bounded on the north by the nether parts of Ben Wyvis, and on the south by a ridge which is aptly named Druimchat—the Cat's Back,—and which is crowned by the remains of one of the most curious morsels of antiquity in the country, a vitrified fort. My friend and I climbed to the top—an undertaking which well repaid the time and labour bestowed on it,—and explored the place, which measures about 420 feet long by 120 wide, and is in capital preservation, the sections made many years ago by Williams, one of the earliest writers on these hill-forts, being still open, and showing in some places vitrified matter to the depth of eight or ten feet. This fortress goes by the name of Knockfarrel—the Hill of the Watchers,—and from its grassy platform may be seen one of the finest views in Ross-shire; the vale of the Peffer below, backed by the sloping braes of Fodderty, and the immense Ben Wyvis in the background, its brow darkened by a summer mist, and its broad shoulders, even in the hottest day of the year, flecked with snow, and thus able to fulfil, when called upon, the condition on which its proprietrix holds it from the Queen, that of paying a snowball any day of the year if required,—probably the ancient mode of supplying the royal household with ice, before the Wenham Ice Company came into existence. Behind again are the

dark green pine woods of Brahan, with the charming Lake Ousie sparkling in the sun, its ripples breaking in silvery streaks on the wooded islets that dot its surface, the whole forming a landscape which, once seen, is a joy for ever.

Knockfarrel is a favourite spot for picnic parties from the Spa, the greensward on the top forming a charming ball-room; champagne sparkles, merrythoughts are broken in trembling fingers, and matches are made. The braes of Fodderty themselves are a charm, there being nearly a hundred cottages on as many acres of land, their whitewashed faces and brown or red thatched roofs harmonizing sweetly with the green and yellow of the surrounding fields. The sight is a capital illustration of the crofter system of tillage, "where every rood of ground maintains its man," a hundred families being crowded into a space of ground which would better have been added in the shape of a couple of fields to the large farm that lies in the valley below. The various patches were, I believe, originally allotments granted to the hardy veterans who returned from the great American war.

Strange to say, the braes of Fodderty, with Ben Wyvis (Mountain of Storms), form part of the county of Cromarty, which, though comparatively small, is made up of eleven separate patches, whimsically inserted into various portions of the larger county of Ross, like lumps of quartz in puddingstone; an arrangement of territory which is said to have been effected through the influence of George, Viscount Tarbat, afterwards Earl of Cromarty, who, wishing to have all his lands included in one shire, got the outlying portions annexed in 1685 and 1698, his town residence, Caroline Park, near Edinburgh, being included with the rest. From similar causes, many of the houses in the Canongate of Edinburgh belong to different counties in Scotland, from their having been the town residences of various noblemen whose estates lay in those different shires.

Descending Knockfarrel, which was probably used as a signal station, Craig-Phadric, near Inverness, and Dunskaith, on the northern Sutor of Cromarty, similar eminences being distinctly seen from it, we came down upon the old churchyard, situated on a little eminence to the left of the road, and, a short distance further on, the parish kirk of Fodderty, a plain building of red sandstone, before which are two of those large standing stones so common in the Highlands, and said to mark the battle-sites of Celtic conflicts, whose petty interests scarcely deserve the honour of sober narration. The Foddertyites, it is more important to state, were to the latest staunch Episcopalians, and could boast of numerous Jenny Geddeses in their ranks, who rose up and stoned every Presbyterian "loon" who ventured to show his face for ordination. It was many years after the beginning of last century before a Presbyterian minister could be quietly settled.

Passing the Manse of Fodderty, which lies embosomed in trees, a perfect picture of quiet repose, and beyond it a charming gate-house to

Castle Leod, half veiled in flowers, the road rises gradually, and enters the Spa, a little village that has clustered itself round the mineral waters which were brought into celebrity about fifty years ago by Dr. Thomson Morrison, of Aberdeenshire, who, in speaking of the climate of the place, always uses the phrase, "the balsamic air of Strathpeffer." Here the tourist may remain for days with much pleasure and profit, and may readily obtain lodgings for a lengthened stay, if he feel disposed to renew his constitution by a full course of the waters. In that case, however, he must make a sojourn for three weeks, the usual time allotted for a perfect cure.

The mode of life at Strathpeffer is much the same as that at other spas, it being the general habit to rise betimes, say between six and eight, and repair to the pump-room to drink the water, in quantities varying from one to nine tumblers a day, the drinking being best got over between the hour of rising and that of dinner, the afternoon and evening being reserved for excursions and indoor amusements. In the heat of the day most visitors turn in to have a quiet siesta, after the hydrotic labours of the morning. The water, which is sulphureous, and a powerful diuretic, is warranted by its admirers to cure every ailment that flesh is heir to, except consumption, which it is said to aggravate grievously. It tastes unpleasantly, however, and always produced in me a nasty sickish feeling, though I never "went in" for more than a couple of tumblers a day. It is said to increase the appetite to an enormous degree, to impart clearness and colour to the skin, lustre to the eye, flesh to the emaciated, and vigour to the enfeebled, the place being, in short, a northern Bridge of Allan, a Ross-shire Moffat. July, August, and September are the harvest months, the place being then quite crowded, and lodgings dear and difficult to be got. There are two good inns, however, and in extremity ousted tourists can easily fall back on Dingwall, between which town and the spa two rival omnibuses run several times a day.

We certainly found old Dr. Morrison's eulogium in nowise too warm, the climate being exceedingly mild and salubrious, the valley nestling secure from all biting winds. The delicious softness of the air made it a pleasure to sit and breathe it; and as we lounged in the pleasant evenings on the benches by the pump-room doors, and—

"With sidelong eye looked out upon the scene,"

while the declining sun shot its "slant and mellow radiance" over the valley, the place seemed quite a paradise, into which the noise of the outer world could not penetrate. After five o'clock it becomes quite gay, the ladies coming out in all their sweet attractiveness; gay dresses shimmer in the sunlight, bright eyes sparkle with delight by the side of marriageable bachelors, and from among the trees in the pleasant walks that surround the pump-room one hears every now and again—

"Silver-treble laughter tinkle."

Walking parties are seen shooting through the neighbouring fields and

across the heathery braes, or by the winding Peffer, in search of ferns and wild flowers. How many matches are made every year at Strathpeffer through the influence of these dangerous fascinations might be an interesting item of statistics, suitable for the Registrar-General's return.

The Spa seemed to us to be a favourite spot with clergymen, who must derive much benefit from the water, if it is reasonable to draw such a conclusion from the numbers that frequent the place. I did not learn, however, that its virtues were particularly efficacious for clerical sore throat. In summer evenings divine service is performed in both pump-rooms (there being two, one for the rich and the other for the poor), and there may be seen a motley gathering of worshippers, such as perhaps only a watering-place can boast of,—millionaires and moneyless men, women of colour and women of no colour, Highlanders and Lowlanders, sheep farmers and soldiers, attorneys and journalists, men and women of all ranks and of all moralities. As at St. Ronan's Well, one may see at Strathpeffer, any day in the season, a Lady Penelope Penfeather, with painters, poets, philosophers, men of science, lecturers, and foreign adventurers in her train; a Sir Bingo Binks, "who drives a regular-built mail, not in any respect differing from her Majesty's, except that it is more frequently overturned;" a Doctor Quacklehen, and a Widow Blower; a moderate annuitist like Mr. Winterblossom; a Rev. Simon Chatterby, gentle as a lamb, "who plays a little on the flute;" a large-boned, red-faced, loud-voiced Mr. Meiklewham, country writer or attorney; and lastly—for the Spa has a sprinkling of red-coats too—a Captain Hector MacTurk, "Highland lieutenant on half-pay, who has a supercilious taciturnity of manner, eats sliced leeks with his cheese; or, as Sir Walter might have expressed it, 'goes heavily in for salad,' and resembles in complexion a Dutch red herring."

"OUT OF CHARITY."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BREAK IN THE CLOUDS.

WE left Eva and her supposed mother driving home from Bangor, on the morning of Wednesday, the 30th of July. Their little excursion had come to an untimely and unpleasant end. The unlucky meeting of the night before had agitated Mrs. Roberts in a most dangerous manner, and had filled Eva's mind with a foreboding of new misfortune. Nor was this foreboding in any way lessened by the new phase in which, as they journeyed home, the feelings of Mrs. Roberts displayed themselves.

It was some comfort to Eva that the presence of a third party, the driver of their car, compelled Mrs. Roberts to be reserved in all she said. But Eva well understood her when she began complaining that she had done very wrong in thus abruptly quitting Bangor. Her first natural horror at meeting the man who had blighted her life was now giving way to the old day-dream which had kept her in hope for so many desolate years. She was thinking of his returning to her and doing her the justice against which the death of his lawful wife had left no positive hindrance. To Eva the idea was horrible. She felt that such a marriage would rather deepen than lighten the family disgrace. Her mother, hitherto the unwilling dupe of a scoundrel, would then become the consenting wife of a scoundrel.

The man's appearance in his old theological guise was but too plain a proof that he was altered in nothing save the name which he bore. Mrs. Roberts had quickly remembered that "M'Quantigan" was known to have been the name of Mr. O'Cullamore's mother, and therefore naturally adopted as his *alias*; and her recollection of the man's face and figure was too painfully accurate to leave her in any doubt. Eva hoped for some time that a striking resemblance, accounted for by close relationship, might have deceived her as to M'Quantigan's identity. And before they quitted the Bangor hotel on Wednesday morning, they heard from their landlady that there had been a row at the meeting so prematurely quitted by themselves; that an Irish gentleman (Papist, of course) had stood up and professed to identify Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan with a convict who, some years before, had been transported for bigamy. (The Irish gentleman had been removed by the police, and the meeting had taken its course. We need hardly say that with the ladies and gentlemen who promote such meetings, no crime possible to man could make a Protestant champion unacceptable.) Nearly all their way home Mrs. Roberts went on with as much openness as the presence of a third party allowed, to talk

of her hopes that Mr. M'Quantigan had recognized her, and that he would follow her to Llynbwllyn, ready to offer the long-deferred atonement. Eva would have been glad to tell her mother that her hope was an idle dream, which had better be put aside; but she felt it but too probable that the idea might quickly become a fact. Her mother had money; Mr. M'Quantigan's present occupation indicated that he had little or none. A very few days might determine her mother on a marriage,—a marriage likely to be followed up by fresh ill-treatment, and a second desertion. The real marriage would renew, and perhaps in greater measure, all the misery and cruelty of the mock marriage. That the semi-religious character maintained by M'Quantigan would coerce him into decency, our heroine could not entertain much hope. She knew—alas! it lies on the surface of all history—how much personal wickedness will be pardoned on account of zeal in controversy. She also knew that this perverse morality, too common everywhere, was familiar indeed to that Orange Association, which numbered Murphy M'Quantigan, as it had numbered Bryan O'Cullamore twenty years before, among its loudest and busiest maintainers. Eva did not know very much about Orangemen. She did not know, for instance, that once upon a time, and in a cathedral city of England, a clergyman advocated from the pulpit the dethronement of Queen Victoria, ere her approaching marriage destroyed the hopes of having an Orange king; but she knew enough to know that her wretched father was likely, for all his Protestantism, to commit the first act of wickedness that promised him anything safely advantageous.

A marriage with her mother might be plausibly represented as a very virtuous act, and it would put into his hands, without any danger whatever, a very substantial sum of money.

Of one thing Eva felt quite sure,—if her mother obtained and embraced the opportunity of such a marriage, she could not make her abode with her parents.

Though he was her father, M'Quantigan was not a man under whose roof she could allow herself to live. In such a case—with great sorrow, but with entire decision—she must give up as hopeless the task she had set herself, that of comforting and sustaining her foolish, helpless mother. Yet all this new dreaded folly might never be brought to pass. M'Quantigan might not have noticed them; or, having noticed them, he might not think it wise to follow them. Possibly, with the help of her uncle Dowlas, who she knew would regard the matter as she did, Mrs. Roberts might be kept from contact with the man who had so unhappily come in her way again. All that could be done to keep them asunder should, at any sacrifice whatever, be done.

With such thoughts as these, Eva found herself arriving at Llynbwllyn again. For once she was verily glad to look forward to the company of aunt Dowlas.

In her presence Mrs. Roberts would be a little backward in talking of

her newly awakened hopes. But Mrs. Dowlas, so very often present when her absence would have been a delight, was absent on this rare occasion which would have made her presence welcome. When they drove to the door, Winifred Williams informed them that her master and mistress had both gone out very early in the morning, but intended to return in the afternoon. Rebecca Jane, with the other children, was left at home. To the inquiries of her aunt and cousin that young lady had no satisfactory answer to give.

"Mamma said I was not to say anything at all. She never meant you to know anything about her having gone; she thought you wouldn't be home until after she and papa came home. She'll be dreadfully angry when she finds you *have* come home, I'm sure."

Eva neither cared nor attempted to know the motive for this sudden and secret journey; but her mother was anxious, and questioned Winifred. Winifred, in the absence of positive information, felt sure that Mr. and Mrs. Dowlas had gone to see Mr. Owen Gryffyth, who lived about nine or ten miles from Llynbwllyn, and between whom and the Roberts family there was a species of family connection. Mrs. Roberts astonished Eva by the complaints she lavished on her sister's behaviour.

They were, however, followed up by such explanations as brought Eva to understand, though not to sympathize with them. We ourselves, if we are interested in Eva, must not imitate her own indifference, as Mr. Gryffyth and his affairs were detailed to her.

This is what she was told:—

Mr. Owen Gryffyth's father—now long deceased—had taken for his second wife a woman somewhat his inferior in station. She was, indeed, the sister of Mr. David Roberts, of Liverpool, and therefore the aunt of Eva's mother. She had merited and won a great regard from her stepson; and on this affection, and on the fact of his never having married, Mrs. Dowlas had built great hopes in respect of the wealth he would leave behind him. He had, indeed, one nephew, the son of his only sister,—of brothers he had never had any. But that nephew had married and settled in England, and had formed connections, moreover, as remote as possible from the likings and customs of his old Welsh uncle. And between them, as far as was known, there had been an utter cessation of intercourse during more than twenty years. Mr. Gryffyth had, up and down North Wales, more distant relations of his own, but there were none for whom he was known to entertain any special preference. And Mrs. Dowlas herself was not alone in believing that she and her family might look to enjoy the largest slice of the inheritance he would leave, at all events for somebody. He was, for a secondary squire, a wealthy man; his possessions could hardly fall short of two thousand a year. He was much afflicted with the gout, and might either go off suddenly any day, or might survive—for he was but seventy—to a much more advanced age.

As Mrs. Roberts was wont to say, "he was always going to go, and

never going.” He had been very kind to the Dowlas family, but had encouraged their hopes by no definite promises. Very likely he would allow his nephew to have all in the end. His acquaintance thought he would choose to die without any will whatever. His nephew had taken his own way in life, but that way had proved itself a singularly successful one. Rich people generally like to leave their money with those whose present prosperity at least argues worldly prudence. It was to inquire how things were progressing,—whether the nephew had come into the foreground at last; whether any will had been made; whether “uncle Owen,” as Mrs. Dowlas taught her children to call him, would pity and relieve her dreadful suspense at last. It was for each and all those purposes that Mrs. Dowlas had insisted on the secret journey. Hence her proposal to Eva of the excursion to Bangor. She had intended that Mrs. Roberts and her daughter, on their coming home, should find her already returned, and so remain in ignorance of her own journey. Rebecca Jane had very good ground for saying that her mamma would be exceedingly wrathful at finding her sister and her niece returned before her.

Some time in the afternoon the rector and his wife did return. Poor Morgan looked as if he had had an unusually hard day of it. His wife had been terribly put out of temper by the untoward behaviour of Mr. Gryffyth. He had received and entertained them kindly enough, but he had not lifted one corner of the veil that shrouded his testamentary intentions. Moreover, he had allotted to Mr. Dowlas more of his company than he would allow his lady to share. And Mrs. Dowlas’s temper needed no such aggravation as the sight of the other excursionists returned before her. However, there are limits to human wickedness, as there are limits to human excellence, and when Mrs. Dowlas saw how poorly her sister looked, she forbore from knagging her, as it would have greatly relieved her to do. It was not so safe attacking Eva. She did not, however, let her niece altogether alone. It was the excellent lady’s habit, whenever she had given cause of complaint to others, to be beforehand, and reply to their reproaches before they were uttered. On this occasion she really succeeded in putting our heroine *hors de combat* by a few energetic words. “Be you as nasty to me as you can, Miss Eva, you’ll always find that I can be still nastier to you,”—a piece of self-assertion which it would have been hardly just in Eva to dispute.

Towards evening, and having silently acquiesced in this inferior position, Eva strolled out for a walk amongst the hills. It was a clear, bright afternoon; the clouds were few, and far above the mountain-tops; only on Snowdon, the loftiest of them, there rested a pillar of golden haze, pure and bright as though some angelic presence was taking there a momentary rest. The nearer hills were all purple with their flowering heaths. Surely it is the sternest form of natural beauty which appeals most soothingly to the sense of the unhappy. Eva was now amongst the unhappy. It is hard, at eighteen, to be without hope; but Eva could

now never hope for the only thing by which happiness could come to her. Should it even prove possible to throw doubt on the evidence which had assigned Mrs. Roberts as her mother, what reasonable creature could believe but that, one way or other, her parentage was of the most degrading kind?

Life henceforth was to her a thing to be borne, never to be enjoyed. Let her not be too severely blamed if there were moments when she doubted the Justice which had so decreed. She caught herself envying the aged women whom she saw toiling along the road which was trodden so lightly by herself. *They* could have no worthy cause of sorrow. Their painful pilgrimage was all behind them, and the doors of the great Hospice were opening before them, inviting them to lasting rest. Happy they to whom the very sorrow of their lives must make the more welcome that kindly repose already so nearly attained by them! Unhappy she whom so vast and dreary an expanse of life divided from the only peace that she ever could know!

She set herself to toil up a steep hill, which promised an extensive prospect for all, with strength and patience to reach its summit. She felt a bitter sort of pleasure in the fatigue that assured her how to her, as to other weak mortals, the day of release must come. Then better and wiser thoughts were stirred within her, and the majesty of the mountains, as she looked at them from the hills she had climbed, had in it a silent eloquence of rebuke. Who was *she*, to think that sorrow had never existed until its hand had been laid upon herself? There were many mourners in this world, and not nearly all of them could retire to contemplate the scenery which had given her spirit so much rest already. Such liberty might not always be her own. In her future life of dependence—for what besides could be her lot?—she might come to long for the solitary joys of her present existence, and might vainly wish to have them back again,—aunt Dowlas and her tongue included in the bargain.

She kept rising and pacing about the summit she had reached, and then again sitting down to think. She thought of the new anxiety which might be coming near her in the reappearance of her unhappy father. But more than all, she thought of Richard. She felt it was her duty to forget him. She could not do it all at once. But could she do it by degrees? She thought she would examine herself day by day, and see if by any, though by the least perceptible degree, she were approaching the accomplishment of that hard duty. Then she sat herself down again on the mountain-side, she never knew for how long. For aught she could tell, she slept—at least, her thoughts appeared to chase each other up and down within her, uncontrolled by any such power as the wakeful commonly exercise over them. Her mother, whom she could only pity; her father, whom she could only dread; her aunt, whom she could but keep from hating; her uncle, whom she could not like as cordially as, in her inmost heart, she felt he deserved; the Ballows, her faithful friends, from whom

she could not help feeling that the fatal discovery had put her at a distance: each and every one of these people mingled confusedly in all her thoughts, and one other always besides them,—always Richard—Richard—Richard.

When she roused herself and looked up again, she saw that the mountains had disappeared. The sun had gone down, and a curtain of whitish grey mist was hung over all things, and only the valley lying just below the hill she had ascended was now distinguishable by the eye. She lost no time in making her way downwards, and without many minutes of doubt contrived to trace her way backwards to the road which would lead into Llynbwllyn. It was crossed in one place by a brook. When, after passing over the stream, she withdrew her eyes from the stepping-stones that formed the only transit, she saw, just in front of her on the road, the figure of a tall man dressed in black.

Northern Wales is favourably known for its freedom from crime, and Eva was a girl of more than average boldness, therefore the sight in itself need have caused no alarm in her. And none at all would there have been, only as she came near to him—for he was standing still—he put out his hand, and insisted that she should stop.

“What do you want? I have no money about me, and you had better let me pass at once.”

“I don’t want your money, Miss. Sure, though, I *do* want your money, but not just now. It’s your name I’m wanting. Are you Miss Roberts?”

“Yes; at least, that is the name by which I am known here. Now you may let me pass. You can have no right to detain me.”

“I *have* the right to detain ye. I am your father.”

For one moment Eva’s eyes flashed with an indignant scorn. Then she remembered that in all likelihood this dreadful stranger was only telling the truth; and she cowered and shrank with a sense of shame and degradation hitherto quite unfelt by her.

Alas! she was not aware how soon and how entirely *another* source of shame would open its depths at her feet, and cause her to think of the present moment as of one comparatively happy and proud.

She had not the evening before taken much notice of the man before her; nor, until she and her mother had retreated to their inn, was she aware how great and terrible an interest she had in him. But her mother had been dwelling lengthily and minutely on his appearance, and on the changes which twenty years had or had not effected in him.

Too surely the man before her, whose career had been a very mass of lies, was, for this once, uttering the truth. In half a minute he spoke again.

“If you’ll ask your mother—she’ll very likely wish me back in Australia,—but she’ll tell you that what I say is quite true.”

This aroused Eva. It recalled to her the purpose which, in the prospect of such a meeting as had already now befallen her, had taken shape in her mind. She must keep her unhappy parents asunder. Her father, as his speech denoted, had not as yet sought an interview with her

mother. Perhaps he would not do so at all. He was, possibly, quite ignorant of the foolish longing which possessed his victim's mind; he might even be ignorant how greatly her father's death had improved her pecuniary position. Eva thought that, could she ward off a meeting so fraught with new iniquity and new calamity, she could bear with fortitude such annoyance as only concerned herself. So she nerved herself to say,—

"I cannot doubt what you say, and I will gladly, gladly meet your wishes in any way. But pray do not, for the present at all events, insist on seeing my mother. Her health is far from good, and I do not think you would desire to make it worse."

"Is it worse that I should make her? And what d'ye mean by saying so?"

"I mean what I could not tell you without the greatest pain,—to myself, at all events. She has had a very unhappy life, and it is only within the last week or two that I have had it in my power to be of any comfort to her."

Eva did not think fit to tell her father—what was almost certainly unknown to him—of the strange events that had alienated her from, and then, after all, restored her to, the woman she had now accepted for her parent.

"You think," said her other parent—"you and your mother think me such a sinner that I should defile you by my very presence. I was a sinner once, but I've repented, and I've been converted; and it's all the better for me now that I was once about the greatest sinner in all Europe. Sure I'm not ashamed to say so."

And Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan attempted to sustain his singular pride by sundry extracts from the Scriptures, which we would rather not quote after him. He further talked with Eva about sundry less exalted matters. He was a lively adherent of the good old puritan doctrine that the earth, as well as heaven, is the patrimony of the self-declared saints. Neither in this respect shall we set down all he said.

Without knowing all that Eva felt about her mother, he found out that she did desire that Mrs. Roberts should not be visited by him. And the desired non-interference he was prepared to grant, if he might be supplied with the money so anxiously craved by him. He informed his supposed daughter that he had come to Bangor for his platform duties, without the remotest idea of the *rencontre* in store for him. Some inquiries, made the next morning at the hotel, had confirmed the suspicion with which the appearance of the woman whom his entrance had scared away had already awakened in his mind. By-and-bye he parted from Eva, on the understanding that, at seven o'clock on the very next evening, she should meet him in the very same place, bringing with her whatever money lay at her disposal. Then they went their several ways; he to a roadside inn about a mile away from Llynbwllyn, she to her home at the Rectory, which she succeeded in reaching before it was entirely dark.

By a very happy paradox, the more suspicious and angry Mrs. Dowlas was made by Eva's lengthened absence, the less she cared to question her. With a self-knowledge that, put to its rightful use, might have done her good, Mrs. Dowlas felt certain that Eva's great endeavour was at all times to have as little of her aunt's society as was compatible with living in a house that called her its mistress. So our heroine was troubled with no questions as to the cause which had kept her out of doors so late. Mrs. Dowlas did, of course, deliver herself of sundry snappish comments, but as Eva was too pre-occupied to heed them, neither need we set them down in this place. The time for retiring to rest came not long afterwards. Eva saw her mother into her room; then, returning down-stairs, she made a pretence of arranging her work-basket in the parlour, until she could safely seek the interview she desired with her supposed uncle. The same benevolent nature which has caused the dock to grow hard by the stinging-nettle, had appointed that Mrs. Dowlas should always be very sleepy at bedtime. Therefore her luckless husband was able every night to gain an hour or two of quiet reading in his little study. Morgan Dowlas was a studious man, and under happier domestic circumstances his ability and excellence might have commended him to the powers who dispense the higher prizes of the Church in Wales. As it was he could never wish for any great preferment. Any promotion which tended to make him a more public character would only make more conspicuous, and therefore more afflicting, the evil qualities of his wretched wife. But this enforced obscurity was by far the easiest portion of the load he was compelled to bear.

When, on this particular night, he was ensconced in his study, and the rest of the family safe up-stairs, Eva went in, intending to seek his advice as to the new difficulty she was now compelled to face. She began by apologizing for disturbing the only hour of the whole twenty-four in which any peace was assured to him. And then she told him both of the adventure which had hastened the return home of herself and her mother, and of her own encounter with Mr. M'Quantigan that very evening.

If Eva had any dread lest Mr. Dowlas should blame her for being afraid where no fear was, of that she was very quickly relieved. He evidently regarded the matter with a most serious anxiety.

“I am distressed beyond measure,” he said. “I am really more anxious than I can well express; for I know if this unhappy man—I cannot bear to call him your father,—I know if he sees your mother, and gets her once to listen to him, he may lead her into any folly which it may be his interest that she should commit. She will marry him if he asks her, and give up all she has to him, and in return receive the very worst treatment from him.”

“Yes, indeed. What you say has already occurred to me; it sickens me to think of it. My poor, poor, foolish mother! Oh! is there no way of protecting her against herself?”

"My dear, we will protect her against herself if there be any way of doing so. You have shown yourself clever in perceiving where the exact danger lies; and *he* has only too good a reason for knowing the incurable weakness of your mother's character."

"But, uncle, how is it that he did not at once go to *her*,—I mean to my mother? Do you think it possible that the man I saw to-night was deceiving me, and that he is not—not the person which he claims to be?"

"From the description you have given me of his appearance, I fear it is all too true. As you are aware, I knew him years ago in Liverpool, and, allowing for the lapse of time and the fearful adventures through which he has gone, the man as I knew him then and the man as you describe him now must surely be one and the same."

"And—and, uncle, I greatly fear that his character is even less changed than his appearance."

"Poor man! Indeed, the way in which, as you tell me, he *talked* about the change within him is but too positive a proof that *no* change for the better has taken place in his heart. I fear he is as greatly to be dreaded as of old. But you were wondering why he sought you out first, and not your mother. This may be well worth considering; it may put us into the way of keeping him and poor Susanna apart entirely. I should say that he is very likely not aware how your mother might receive him. He may suppose that bitter experience has made her dread him. If he thinks so, let us keep him in that belief if we can; and he may go away from this neighbourhood without ever discovering what a ready prey he would find her."

"But your poor infatuated mother has talked to so many people about his coming back to do her justice one day, that it is but too likely, if he goes on inquiring and considering, that he will find out how easily—and he is one of those men who are always wanting money—he might possess himself of all that now belongs to your mother. You say that he asked about her this evening?"

"Yes. I did not hint to him by a single word that my mother had ever expressed a wish to see him."

"It is very well you did not. However, supposing—what is not very unlikely—that he has heard or guessed at your mother's real feelings already, what, in such a case, can be deterring him from seeking an interview with her? It may be—I should be sorry to deny the possibility of it,—it may be some lingering remnant of conscience, some sense of shame, which makes him dread the presence of one so cruelly injured by him. In that case our difficulty is all the less, for it is on the side of your mother, not of him. But perhaps it may be that he is afraid of coming forward; that his recent life will no more bear inquiry than his life as it was twenty years ago. Weak as poor Susanna is, there is a degree of folly impossible even to her. She is not capable of giving herself over to a man whom she *knew* to be as dangerous as ever. And I shall set about a few

inquiries which, if there be any matters of the kind in the last few years of his life, will most likely bring them to our knowledge. It is a painful thing, and a bitter thing, thus to be talking to a daughter of her father. But I am sure, my dear niece, you yourself feel that no choice is open to us. Between an innocent mother and a guilty father, when their interests are opposed, you cannot hesitate for one moment.”

“No; and I feel more deeply indebted to your uncle than I can ever tell you in words.”

“I should have done as much had I never known you. But how greatly your poor mother’s happiness, or rather, how greatly her escape from utter wretchedness, depends upon *your* prudence, *your* patience, *your* forbearance, why, I think you are, by this time, fully aware. As long as you can stand between your parents no mischief may occur. Your unhappy father, whatever his reason, chooses to make *you*, and not your mother, the medium of his wishes. I do not say that he has any claim, either on your money or on your affection, but if you throw him over, you then drive him to his second resource,—that of appealing to your mother; and we both agree how dreadful the renewed intimacy may prove to her.”

“Well, uncle, I will do my utmost. May Heaven give me patience for it! You will not think it necessary to say a word of this to—to my aunt?”

“By no means. I am bound by no sort of promise to her in *this* respect. It will be well to conceal it from her. Caution your mother against repeating your last night’s adventure to her.”

“Oh, uncle, there are times when I think that it would be a gain to her if she lost her reason altogether. As it is, she can neither protect herself nor be committed to the protection of others.”

“She is a pitiable sight indeed. The blind from birth, to whom the world is *still* without form, and void; the deaf and dumb from birth, to whom all life is mute as death,—they need not so much of our compassion as one who has been taught to worship a God who can only be dreaded, not loved. Such a training poor Susanna received, and it is at the root of most of her deplorable weakness.”

“Well, uncle, thank you once more. But stay, you said just now that you had made no promise to Mrs. Dowlas on *this* matter. Ought I to know of any promise which you *have* made to her?”

“It’s a thing of no matter now, Eva. However, you may as well know. Why, before you came amongst us—in fact, when there was still some little doubt whether—whether it would turn out that your proper place was amongst us,—my wife was somewhat unwilling to believe the evidence which pointed out your close connection with us. And I promised her—I promised her in very decided words—that if I heard of anything which contradicted such evidence, I would at once and fully acquaint her with it. As it has happened, the thing need now be of no concern to us.”

To which Eva could not but agree, and she bade her uncle good night; and, what was less a matter of course, enjoyed a good night herself.

She was to meet the man whom she considered her father at seven in the evening of the coming day (Thursday). As we have said before, she was well supplied, for the present, with money; and on reviewing her purse, she found that if she put thirty pounds into M^r Quantigan's hands, she should still have a small sum left her. She might also rely on the Ballows, in case of any unexpected necessity. As soon as she could see her mother's health improved, and her father persuaded or compelled to leave Llynbwllyn alone, Eva was resolved on beginning to earn a maintenance for herself. About the middle of that day she called at one or two of the few shops with which Llynbwllyn was endowed, that she might exchange her money into the form which would be most convenient to her father.

It was on returning to the two o'clock dinner of the Rectory that she received, at the postman's hand, two letters for herself,—the one very large in size, the other of about the average bulk. They were each addressed in a handwriting which she knew. The one she opened and read at once, the other she kept until after dinner. It would appear that the one she did peruse was quite enough to dine upon, for the extreme agitation displayed by her was evident to all at table with her. Her mother questioned her; her aunt spitefully suggested that she had found out a new sweetheart; her uncle, who attributed her excessive emotion to the matter on which they had conversed the night before, was astonished at her sudden loss of self-control, and entreated her, by many significant looks, to consider what mischief she might be causing. She restrained herself as she could, and when dinner was over, went up to her room to read the larger and as yet unopened epistle; but not until she had read the former more than once again.

We shall give—at least, in part—the letters which proved so agitating and astounding to Eva. We shall give them, *not* in the order in which they were read by herself, for we shall quote Mr. Ballow's letter first. Its main contents you already know. It gave, in detail, the results of such investigation as the writer had been induced to make by the unexpected and gladdening arrival of Mrs. Markley from France. It enclosed corroborative documents; you are already aware of what kind, and from whom procured. Mr. Ballow set every fact in order, and left no possible objection unanswered. And his letter, partly consisting of matter which is fully known to you already, concluded with the following appeal:—

"And thus, my dear child, you will perceive that the proofs which seemed to identify you but a fortnight ago with the child of that unhappy Mrs. Roberts may now be set aside as the most baseless of all baseless things. *Her* child, it is manifest, expired in the first few months of its ill-starred existence, and you owe no manner of duty to that family with whom, by a too hasty sense of duty, you insisted on casting in your lot. I can scarcely believe that it will cost you any sacrifice to break away from them once and for ever, so I need scarcely urge you to lose no time

in returning to the home which it is our greatest happiness again to offer you. I fear you will be led to trouble yourself again with conjectures as to your true and actual origin. My dear Eva, with all the earnestness which my deep interest in you may permit me to employ, I pray you to let this question rest in the doubt and darkness it appears to be the will of Heaven it should abide. If your unknown parents were guilty, thank the gracious Providence which has not permitted their sin to overshadow you. If they were only unfortunate, be grateful that it is given you to be happier than they were. You know, as well as any words of mine can assure you, that you involve in any resolution which condemns you to moral suicide, the happiness of another as well as your own. Let me beseech you—as I trust there is no irreverence in making such use of sacred words,—let me beseech you to forget the things which are behind, and to look forward to those things which are before. Think of the duties to which you are invited in the future, and no more of the inexplicable mysteries of the past. I am no visionary. I do not say that to be well born is not a good thing; I estimate such advantages very highly. But is nothing left to such as are deprived of such a privilege,—the privilege of gathering honour from those who were before them? Surely, my dear Eva, it is given to you to resolve that *your* children in the time to come shall never be ashamed of *you*. It is within you to display how highly born is *every creature* made in God's likeness; how exalted a pedigree belongs to *all* who can plead that heavenly origin which we know is common to man.

"With my best congratulations for this most happy discovery, and my heartfelt desire that a long life of happiness may lie before you, I am, my dear Eva, your ever sincere and affectionate friend,

"FREDERICK BALLOW."

"P.S.—I write from London, as you see, but shall be back at Minchley ere you can receive this. I believe I shall find all well there. Mrs. Markley, to whom we are so much indebted, returned to Dieppe yesterday. She was singularly silent and reserved as to the situation she occupies there; but that, of course, does not affect her testimony in *our* affair. Of her identity there can be no question. 'Madame Durange' is her name now, but I catch myself repeatedly calling her by the name under which Mr. Ferrier knew her. *A certain person* has been suddenly summoned to Scotland by the illness of a friend; I much mistake if he will not have *his* opinion on this matter. Be quick in returning to Minchley. Never mind writing at all."

The other letter was from that personage, unnamed by Mr. Ballow, whom a friend's illness had called into the Highlands. His letter we give as it was written.

"Inchorrack, near Glenorchy,
"29th July, 1856.

"MY OWN, MY BELOVED EVA,—Mr. Ballow's promised telegram has just been sent on to me here, and it briefly informs me that 'all is right,' by which I know that the inquiries which he came to London to make, and in which I had hoped to aid him, have turned out as we wished that they should turn out. 'All is right,' and there is now no longer any obstacle between myself and my best-beloved Eva; 'all is right,' and the unhappy promise by which I made my love dependent on my Eva's birth

may now be treated as though it had never been. Mr. Ballow will shortly assure you that the people to whose claims upon you you listened, in your noble sense of justice, too readily, have no manner of right whatsoever over you. Nor, I am confident to say, will my dearest Eva be ever rightfully-claimed by any of whom she would have reason to be ashamed. But I care for none of those things, I claim your precious promise that, if no degrading discovery should occur—*your* words, my Eva, but never mine,—in six months I should receive you as my own for ever and ever. That promise, remember, was given on the *seventh* of this month, and must count from thence. Oh, if, in consideration of the unmerited sorrow this false report has brought upon us, you would but dispense with the torturing interval altogether! I should, by this time, have been on my way to say all this for myself in person, only yesterday, not long after my meeting with Mr. Ballow in town, I was called hither by some very sad news. My very dear friend, Alexander Maxwell, has been dangerously ill. I trust I need only now say 'has been,' for on my arrival here to-day—I travelled the whole of last night and this morning—I found that he had taken a favourable turn. I trust he will improve from day to day. I am writing from the house of his father, Sir Alan Maxwell. Alexander is unmarried at present, and will therefore be fully qualified, if nothing happens to him in the mean time, to act in a certain capacity towards myself. You will learn to esteem him as much as I do myself. Yes, Eva, you will indeed, for he was once the means of saving my life. The danger which may still be hanging over his own is the one only thing which, with all my joy, disquiets me still. But it will pass away; I feel a confidence that it will pass away. And before I leave Inchorrack I shall have the delight of telling Maxwell of all the happiness that is now before me. Only let me plead your forbearance, my Eva, towards my poor misjudging mother. Believe me when I pledge myself that her prejudices will shortly give way, and that she will be deeply sorry for having ever entertained them. But be that as it may, you know that I am ever the same to you. Let me have a letter from you without delay, and let me hear that you are safe again with our excellent friends at Minchley. I cannot bear to think of you among those people whom my mother's foolish blundering intruded upon you at Leamington. That hideous creature with the red face! But let us be thankful that you need have no more to do with her, and that you may put her away as a nightmare from which you have now been awakened for ever.

"Always your own,

"RICHARD."

Eva's first thoughts on fully comprehending the discovery to which these two letters referred may be guessed at by every one. Seldom has the load lying on a single heart been so largely lightened in so short a time. The wide and dark gulf of disgrace which had divided her from Richard Ferrier had now disappeared from sight, like some imaginary lake which mocks the thirsty wayfarer of the desert.

But even in this her supreme joy she could consider the other deliverances which the recent *dénouement* entailed with it. She was no daughter of poor Mrs. Roberts, her pity for whom it was so very hard to dissociate from contempt. She was no niece of Mrs. Dowlas, who, seen

but once, had been the *bête noir*—*bête rouge*, we might more fitly say—of all her childhood and youth, and who, unlike to other monsters, was yet more terrible on closer acquaintance. She was—most blissful deliverance of all!—no daughter of that miserable man whom she had promised to meet that evening, and whose possible influence on her future had filled her with so great a terror.

Now what, in her so greatly altered circumstances, ought she to do? Should she go down-stairs, announce the turn which events had taken, and prepare to quit a home to which no duty remained to bind her? That, of course, she *might* do; but then she considered how great a shock her sudden desertion might inflict on poor, unhappy Mrs. Roberts. In common humanity she must break the matter to her in the gentlest and most gradual manner.

But what was she to do as to the appointed interview with Mr. M'Quantigan? To him she owed none of the consideration to which weakness and affliction are entitled. Besides, now she knew him to be no father of hers, there were serious objections against her holding any manner of intercourse with so infamous a man. To be sure, she might leave him to wait at the trysting-spot until he was tired; or—for even the worst have their rights—it would be more becoming in her to meet him where she had appointed, and, by then and there informing him of her true position, cut short the link which for a few passing hours had bound them so closely together. She could easily do this, but what was likely to follow she very well knew; he would at once, in the manner best adapted to his interests, endeavour to recover his influence over the miserable woman once before so fatally beguiled by him.

Eva could hardly feel herself responsible for the happiness of Mrs. Roberts; still, no fellow-creature is outside the pale of sympathy. And Eva, though certainly under a mistake, had, only the night before, undertaken to stand, at whatever sacrifice of self, between the wretch M'Quantigan and his but too easy victim. Should she consult Mr. Dowlas? His kindness, his good sense, would be now most valuable to her. But suddenly she recollected one of the things which, in their interview the night before, he had expressly told her. He had promised his wife, should he at any time hear Eva's claims to relationship brought in question, at once to inform her thereof. Thus to tell the matter to Mr. Dowlas would be to tell it to Mrs. Dowlas, and to tell it to Mrs. Dowlas would be to tell it—and, very likely, in the hastiest and harshest manner—to poor Mrs. Roberts herself. Mrs. Dowlas disliked her supposed niece very much; she was very angry with her from her nearer claims to Susanna's love—and money. And she would be pretty quick in pushing the obstacle aside as soon as she found it was no legitimate one after all. It was against her every inclination that Eva came to such a resolve, but she did determine that it was her duty not all at once to break asunder the ties which bound her to the family of Llynbwlyn Rectory. The

final result of the hour or two during which all this was considered by her may be found in a letter which at the end of that time was written by her. It was written to Mrs. Ballow, but was, of course, in answer to the important letter received from Mrs. Ballow's husband.

And thus was Eva's answer given:—

*"Llynbwllyn, near Carnarvon,
"31st July, 1856.*

"MY DEAR, KIND MRS. BALLOW,—You may be sure that Mr. Ballow's letter has given me great joy. I will try to follow his excellent advice, and vex myself no more with wondering who I am. But I have other things of which I must write to you now. You must know, dear Mrs. Ballow, how much pleasure it would give me at once to leave this place and come back to you at Minchley. Upon the whole I have been most uncomfortable here; Mrs. Dowlas's dreadful disposition would make any home a—something very unlike what any home ought to be. The other people of this house are harmless and friendly enough. For Mr. Dowlas himself I have really acquired a great esteem. His lot is indeed a hard one; harder than mine, as I thought it but yesterday. Only last night I was consulting him how I might best befriend the poor woman whom I had been led to consider as my mother. She is in danger of living the worst troubles of her life over again. That man—whom I am deeply thankful to feel is *not* my father—has been showing himself in this neighbourhood, and I am anxious—until some effectual means can be taken to show Mrs. Roberts his real character,—I am anxious to stay here a little longer, in order that I may keep this luckless woman from falling helpless into his hands.

"You will say, my dear Mrs. Ballow—at least, your surpassing kindness towards me will induce you to say,—that Mrs. Roberts has no claim upon me at all, and that I must not leave myself in a false position, only to protect a foolish woman from the consequences of her folly. Dearest Mrs. Ballow, I have been thinking that if there be one person in the world more bound in duty than another to consider every one, be they who and what they will, that person is surely myself. Was I not taken out of the streets, and educated in comfort and abundance, entirely out of charity? What was I to Mr. Ferrier, that he should charge himself so heavily on account of me? What was I to Richard, that he should listen to me, a little beggar girl crying in the streets? Of all the schoolboys then in London, were there many who would not have pushed me aside, and in a minute more have forgotten the very sight of me? And, once again, what was I to my dear Mr. and Mrs. Ballow, that they should trouble themselves with me so prodigiously above my desert? So is it for *me* to refuse to succour others in their distress, on the plea that they are aliens and strangers? And I can only serve poor Mrs. Roberts by allowing her a little longer to consider me her daughter. Besides, to tell her the truth abruptly would be very dangerous, as her health is just at present rather worse than common. If Mrs. Dowlas knew the truth, she would expel me the house almost as summarily as she turned me out of the house near Euston Square fourteen years ago. So I must keep the thing to myself. I hope and believe that this secrecy need not last long. You may trust me to throw it off the moment it ceases to be required for the sake of this poor weak woman. In truth, although it was by no error

of mine that she was induced to claim me as her daughter, I am not certain but that some blame fairly rests upon myself. When, a fortnight ago, I so readily consented to accept my position here, I thought myself actuated by a rigid regard for justice. I now perceive that *pride* had too much concern in my behaviour. I was proud of showing that I did not care what Mrs. Ferrier could do, nor whom she might prove me to be. Perhaps I ought to have waited for stronger evidence; at all events, I think I am doing my duty in resolving as I now have done.

"My love to all at Minchley. Now do let me have a letter to tell me that you think I am quite right.

"Your ever-affectionate

"EVA MARCH (not ROBERTS).

"P.S.—I have heard from Richard, and shall tell him what I have just been telling you. He tells me his friend is better."

Eva's letter to Richard we need not transcribe. By the time it was completely written the hour had arrived which, in Llynbwllyn Rectory, was the customary tea-time. Imposing the utmost wariness upon herself, Miss March proceeded down the stairs. Tea was commencing already. Mrs. Dowlas was rowing her poor husband most furiously, moreover. This was far too familiar a thing to be very agitating in itself, only Eva was afraid lest the matter now in hand involved the premature disclosure of one or other of her secrets.

Mrs. Dowlas had pitched her voice in a key which might have implied that the Menai Straits, and not a few inches of table, interposed between herself and her husband. Eva soon discovered that no such matter as she dreaded was under discussion.

Mr. Dowlas was endeavouring to defend himself as Eva came in.

"My dear, but do consider. Life and death are not amongst the things which we hold in our hands—"

"Don't talk to me, you Jack-in-the-box!"

You have heard this graceful epithet once before proceeding out of the same lips. I am truly sorry to say that it implied a reference to Mr. Dowlas's littleness of size, together with the unusual depth of the pulpit from which he was accustomed to preach.

"Don't talk to me," his wife was just then saying; "didn't that fellow Jones, who goes to Tremallyoc nearly every day, assure us that uncle Owen could not possibly live another week? Not another week! And almost a month gone by since then. And what does Jones tell me to-day? Why, that the old gentleman will go off—he can't now say when! At all events, he's not dead yet. Humph! not dead yet! And after our being told that a week would be sure to end all! Oh! it's shameful!—it's shocking!—it's swindling! But what does a fool like you care?"

The name of Tremallyoc Eva knew to be that of Mr. Gryffyth's abode, and it was that gentleman's tenacity of life, and the consequent delay of what was expected from his will, which was troubling the gentle breast of

Jane Dowlas. Eva was glad to find her so thoroughly pre-occupied, that she was not likely to think of the affairs of which Miss March herself was full.

Our heroine walked out unmolested after tea, taking with her the money she intended to place in M'Quantigan's hands. It should be said that Mr. Ballow's letter had enclosed, amongst its other documents, a note of twenty pounds, so that Eva was better able than before to bestow the sum she had set aside; and, for the reasons indicated already, she did not grudge the sacrifice of it.

She found M'Quantigan awaiting her at the place where they had parted some two-and-twenty hours before. A change indeed had come across her since then, and, in truth, she almost felt as if the scenes of which that encounter in Mrs. Ferrier's garden had been the commencement were just no more than the fleeting phantoms of a restless night.

If the man who thought himself her father had been thinking less intently of his own desires, perhaps he might even have guessed the truth, so different was the demeanour with which she had quitted him the night before from that with which she confronted him now. However, he was thinking of little else besides the money she was to bring with her. One look, which might have been of natural pride, passed over him as they met. Perhaps he was discouraged at the aversion she could not repress entirely; but no softened feeling was any more manifested by him. She placed in his hands the thirty pounds.

"And is that really all you can do at present?" This was his manner of thanking her.

"Indeed, I assure you that it is."

"Very well; you must be better prepared another time. I shall take a holiday in London before I begin my labours again. I shall arrange a series of meetings in the country for the autumn. A girl with your good looks has no right ever to be without money; such a face is a fortune. Well, now we'll say Good-bye. I don't know that your mother would be very glad to see me, so as I've found you to be not such a very bad daughter, I sha'n't trouble her this time. Sure, then, but how is she?"

"Very poorly, and unable to bear any kind of agitation."

"I won't agitate her at all. She must get herself stronger before I spend all this money. Good-bye to you, my dear; I see you've had a good bringing up, and you're very handsome. Never say that I've been a bad father to you."

And then he let her go, and she trusted she was finally rid of him. Elsewhere, and at a moment of overwhelming horror, she was to behold him once again. But, for the present, he was out of her life, and very quickly was all but out of her thoughts. She retreated to the Rectory, her absence having occasioned no curiosity whatever in any one.

All that was to be done appeared complete now, and she might now sit still and wait. She did not think the task remaining to her would

prove a very hard one. It was much easier to bear with Mrs. Roberts, and even with Mrs. Dowlas, now that she might consider them both as strangers; now that she was conscious of enduring them of her own resolve, and from no inability to snap the connection asunder. In her own chamber, and at night, she sat and thought through what a wonderful fortnight she had lately gone; for into that brief period had all her adventures been crowded. The discovery which had appeared to fix, beyond questioning, her identity with the child of Mrs. Roberts; her consequent severance from Richard, and acquiescence in her unwelcome position; her new life in Wales; the horrid apparition of O'Cullamore, *alias* M'Quantigan; the counter-discovery, which had set her free from all this degradation, and given her hopes a new life;—all these things had run their full cycle in the half of one month. No wonder that Eva found thoughts enough to keep her wakeful on that last night. And it was August, and no longer July, ere she lay herself down to rest.

By a kind of reaction, which appears to run alike through the natural and the moral world, the days that followed were as eventless as the previous fortnight had been eventful. Letters were constantly reaching Eva, both from Minchley and from Scotland. The Ballows hardly approved of the intentions announced by her, but rendered full justice to the generous kindness which had dictated them. Richard was bewildered between admiration for the noble generosity which set his Eva so far above every other woman, and his aversion to her continuance in a sphere so utterly unworthy of her presence. However, she was not persuaded to give up the matter abruptly; she hoped that, ere many days, Mr. Dowlas would become possessed of such acquaintance with M'Quantigan's recent life as would compel the latter gentleman to keep his distance. And then, with assistance from the excellent rector, Miss March would gently acquaint Mrs. Roberts with the actual facts, and they might part with no unkindly feelings on either side.

Richard could not indulge his hope of coming to Llynbwllyn. His friend Maxwell, he had the pain of telling Eva, had relapsed into a condition of imminent danger. Another day brought the tidings that there was hope again. But Richard resigned himself to a further stay at Inch-orrack of several weeks; and Eva thought that it might be better they should not meet until her connection with the Dowlases was broken away altogether.

So matters passed on until Saturday, the 10th of August, had come. Eva had continued her solitary walks among the mountains, and once or twice she indulged herself in a carriage excursion. On the evening of the day just named she once more climbed that hill on which she had sat so long and so sadly on the 30th of July, and on descending which she had met that fearful Irishman. Where now had vanished the troubles which appeared, on that wretched evening, to have come to overwhelm her

altogether?—where her visions of a lonely womanhood and a desolate old age? Gone away as entirely as the mists which on that evening had shrouded all the sky, that sky at present so lofty overhead, and so speckless in its white and blue. Down one valley reaching westward Eva beheld a village that she knew to be Tremallyoc; Tremallyoc, the abode, as long as he survived, of Mr. Owen Gryffyth, and, just at present, the subject of Mrs. Dowlas's anxious hopes and fears. The glow of sunset was lighting up the place, and giving it a radiance not its own. As Eva was looking still, the breeze which was blowing from that direction brought with it the toll of a bell. The sound came again and again. Was it a passing-bell? Was it indeed Mr. Gryffyth whose departure from amongst the living was now declared? Eva considered that it would be as well not to mention at the Rectory that she had heard the bell. Mrs. Dowlas would infallibly despatch her husband—all the way to Tremallyoc, if needful—to ascertain if the event had really taken place. When our heroine got home no such tidings had reached the family. Eva did not know why, but the bell seemed to haunt her as with a sound of warning, and more than once in the night she started up, imagining that she heard it, and that it was calling her at once to get up and undertake something or other, but *what* she could never discover.

With a strange, vague feeling of having neglected something, and of lying under a terrible sentence therefrom, Eva by-and-bye awoke altogether, and prepared to spend what might prove the last of her Sundays in Wales.

The bells which rang for church that day reminded her of the bell whose tone so unaccountably haunted her. She was not mistaken as to the occasion of that other bell. When they met after church Mr. Dowlas imparted the tidings which had reached him as he quitted the vestry.

Mr. Gryffyth had expired the previous evening, and shortly after seven o'clock. Mrs. Dowlas, while she expressed herself greatly grieved for this melancholy and solemn dispensation, was evidently very glad at heart. It was a great mercy for Mrs. Dowlas that the task of providing and fashioning her mourning was one that required her every spare hour. Else she would certainly have become insane, or drunk herself into delirium, from her wild anxiety about Mr. Gryffyth's will. Early on Monday she began stitching away, Mrs. Roberts, Eva, and the children all giving such help as they could. Mrs. Roberts herself, as we said, was always in the deepest mourning. The funeral was to be on Thursday. There would be a very large gathering, but it would consist entirely of relatives and connections near at hand.

The coldness between the dead man and his only near relative, his nephew in England, had never passed off after all, and now it must abide, in all its consequences, for ever. Mrs. Dowlas was not alone in believing that her family stood the likeliest chance of inheriting largely under the will. It was no vain expectation, but in accordance with Mr. Gryffyth's expressed intentions, that the Llynbwllyn people, as near connections,

were to be preferred to his distant relations. Only there was reason for doubting whether he might not have died intestate after all,—in which case the Dowlas family would, of course, be nowhere.

To tell all the guesses, conjectures, and suppositions given out by Mrs. Dowlas between the Sunday and the Thursday would be just to double the bulk of our story. Rebecca Jane, essaying a flight of fancy, tumbled over into a very abyss of disgrace.

"Mamma," she suddenly said, while they were all stitching away at some black silk on the Tuesday—"mamma, you don't think it possible that uncle Owen is only *pretending* to be dead all the while?"

"Now, Rebecca Jane, if you profane this melancholy and solemn dispensation by making fun of it, I'll lock you up in the larder until it's all entirely over. You stupid child! how ever *could* anybody pretend to be dead?"

"I don't know, mamma, but I've *read* about it. I read something of the kind in a book cousin Eva gave me. It was about a rich gentleman who had several relations, and they were always saying how sorry they should be when he died. And he was afraid that they would be glad, because they would have his money, you know. And he thought he would just try to find which of them really cared for him; so he told his servant to shut the shutters, and then——"

But we shall never follow through all its issue the scheme which Rebecca Jane was so faithfully recording, for that young lady, in the midst of the recital, was pulled up by a most substantial slap from her mamma, which recalled her thoughts to every-day life at once.

"You little iniquitous thing!—to get such horrid thoughts into your head, and then try to put them into mine! I don't care! It serves you just right if I *have* run the needle into your back! It wouldn't greatly surprise me if it came to your turn to be buried next, going on in the manner you do."

"But, mamma, it *was* in the book. I didn't make the story up myself, I'm sure. I can show you it in the book if you like."

"It *was* in the book! and you didn't make the thing up yourself! I'll tell you what, Rebecca Jane, I've a good mind to throw every book you have on the kitchen fire, that I have. And you needn't have told me that your cousin Eva gave you the book. I know well enough where you get all your wicked thoughts, and who it is that teaches you to mock at your mother."

And Mrs. Dowlas directed at Eva a most intensely vicious look, which was not acknowledged in any way.

The Thursday came. It was a dull, dry morning. An open car was to convey the party of four from Llynbwlyn to Tremallyoc. Eva went along with them; not of her own accord, but at the earnest entreaty of Mrs. Roberts. Miss March possessed a black dress; it had, therefore, cost her no great sum to array herself in mourning. It was an uncom-

fortable position, and she now longed more than ever to escape from it. But this was surely no time for the disclosure which any such escape must involve. They started from the Rectory about half-past ten. It was no very great affair, but it lived in Eva's remembrance vividly and long. Winifred handing in the umbrellas and shawls; the driver giving the first impulse to his horse; each and all of the most trivial accidents of that minute were present with her afterwards, though she noticed them little at the time. They drove out of the village, ascended the first hill, and turned out of sight of their home. Eva knew it not, but in so turning she turned into a new and unexplored existence.

From that hour until the present she has never seen Llynbwllyn again.

CHAPTER X.

TESTAMENTARY.

TREMALLYOC HOUSE, now claiming a special interest from us all, was not a house to be passed unheeded at any time. It was distant from Llynbwllyn about eight miles. A more exact definition of its place I think we need not give. It stood in a bushy garden—a garden so rich in evergreens, that in the rudest winter it was never made quite desolate. It was a dwelling on no large scale. The house was modern and comfortable, and as trim and speckless as you would expect a bachelor's mansion to be. And few tourists, though possessing grander homes of their own, passed by Tremallyoc House without a momentary feeling that they should like to live there.

Such was the home in which Owen Gryffyth, the friend and connection of the Roberts family, was at this time lying dead.

It was no more *his* home. Earthly goods were nothing to him now. That proud, kind, generous, passionate Welsh heart was now as still as a stone, and the delightful house he had built and enjoyed was left for the possession—nobody could at present say of whom.

Nobody could feel sure. But expectation had set in on the side of Mrs. Dowlas and her family.

Mr. Gryffyth, speaking to them and of them, had always said that, aliens in blood though they were, he counted them nearer than his actual kindred. All that was encouraging indeed. But Mr. Gryffyth had never added to it any sure and certain promise. He had never alluded to his house or his lands, as likely one day to own the Dowlas family for their lords. He had given many pecuniary presents to the family of late years. They had been given (systematically, it would appear) at odd and irregular times, that they might not come to be treated as branches of settled income. There was nothing in this very greatly to dishearten the family. Old people do not like to make their intentions known, and have those whom they would benefit pining for their death. But there was reason

for believing that Owen Gryffyth, in his reserve as to his destined legatees, had another and a nobler motive. He was thought to be waiting, waiting to the last, for some advances from the nephew so long separated from him. Had that nephew fallen into poverty, or even into disgrace? I believe that the old Welshman, proud in himself, would have had a fellow-feeling for the pride of another, and would have proffered his help and friendship unsought.

But that nephew was flourishing beyond all rational expectation. A singular stroke of fortune had lifted him up to such solid and assured prosperity as hardly any but Britons enjoy. He was, possibly, a richer man than his uncle. He was certainly moving in a higher social sphere. Owen Gryffyth was, of all unlikely men, about the most unlikely to seek the countenance of those who might be unwilling to give it. However, there was no knowing what might occur. The prosperous nephew might, after all, think it well to be reconciled with his rich uncle. Or motives less selfish might impel him to repair the broken link between them. Then, again, Mr. Gryffyth would, peradventure, leave no will at all. He might have died between the cancelling of one and the framing of another. He might even have chosen to die intestate. It would be a way of giving his nephew what he really longed to give him without compromising his pride by any words of his own. That nephew, so reluctantly discarded, was his sole next of kin, as well as heir-at-law. Therefore, did his uncle die intestate, he would be as surely entitled to the personal property as to the real estate. And Mr. Gryffyth's distant kinsmen would be as certainly disinherited as his near connections, our friends.

As Mrs. Dowlas very tersely put the whole matter,—

"If the worst comes to the worst, and we get nothing, there'll be plenty other people there who'll be disappointed as well as ourselves. That is my one everlasting comfort!"

So saying, she slumped herself down in the car, and they quitted Llyn-bwllyn for Tremallyoc. It was a hilly road, and did not admit of very quick travelling. They reached Tremallyoc about noon. Crowds of relations were streaming up from different directions on the same solemn errand as theirs. We need not do all who came the injustice of supposing that nought but self-interest had drawn them. There were an innumerable multitude of Joneses; a great company of Prychards and Pryces; and (soothingly suggestive to genealogical pride!) an old sharp-nosed maiden lady, of the name of Tudor.

Our four friends, Mr. Dowlas, Mrs. Dowlas, Mrs. Roberts, and Eva, were greeted by the rest in a way to reassure Mrs. Dowlas very greatly. For she, it need not be said, was by far the most anxious of them all; Eva had neither part nor lot in the matter. Mrs. Roberts had never received from the deceased even the doubtful encouragement which had been accorded to her sister. Mr. Dowlas was too steadily unhappy in his married life to expect any good from an earthly source. His inquiring

lady was quickly put in possession of two great facts. The nephew had *not* come forward. He was, very likely, not aware that his uncle was dead. There had, it was pretty sure, been no reconciliation after all. And Mr. Gryffyth *had* left a will behind him. And thus the horrible shadow of an heir-at-law, long threatening to become substantial, would now melt away for ever and ever.

So Mrs. Dowlas took her seat amongst the company waiting in the drawing-room, and became very, very sanguine indeed.

Evidently there was a disposition to view her and her party as the destined winners of the prize put up by Death on that day.

The stealthy displeasure of some of the company was just as reassuring as the smiles of those who, never expecting for themselves, indulged the natural instinct of admiring and courting the prosperous people. By common consent the arrival from Llynbwllyn was *the* arrival of the day. The servants were anxious to lavish their best attentions upon those who, in an hour more, might be endued with sovereign sway over all the house and its inmates. Even the hired horse which had drawn them thither was made to taste of their advantages, and was fed, watered, stabled, and groomed; while the horses of meaner expectants were left dependent on the providence and diligence of those who had brought them.

It was a day neither bright nor rainy. The sun showed himself not once, but the clouds hung high and harmless above all save the loftiest hills.

The funeral procession would walk through the village to Tremallyoc Church. The deceased had been a Dissenter, but he would, by his own sanction, be buried in the churchyard. The service would be read in English,—the Gryffyth kindred scarcely reaching down to any Welshman, to whom the Saesenog is an unknown tongue. A Welsh hymn was sung—never mind *how*—by the school children, as the company approached the churchyard gate. All the company were there. Eva walked side by side with Mrs. Roberts. She felt painfully out of place. But as the ceremony went on, and the sacred words were said, she felt her embarrassment greatly diminish. She lost the feeling of being an intruder. For death, most natural of all that is nature, makes everybody akin; and we all are brethren standing on the brink of the grave.

There had been a slight refreshment offered at the first arrival of the guests, and there was to be a more substantial luncheon when the will should have been read, and the momentous question decided as to the property the deceased had left behind him. It was very well that of all the company, so many of them were careless as to the will, and having a long way to drive home, went off as soon as the funeral was over. For how they could all have crowded themselves into the dining-room—the largest apartment in the house—is a thing which our imagination is unequal to compass. However, for such as had reason for thinking that they might be remembered, there was room without excessive crowding. Mr. Lewis was to

read the will. Mr. Lewis was the lawyer and friend of the Mr. Gryffyth whom they had left in his grave. By a tacit consent, and in view of coming events, our friends were suffered to occupy the uppermost places,—that is to say, the four chairs nearest to the table at which Mr. Lewis was seated. He held the bulky paper in his hands.

The company had rustled into their places, and even Mrs. Dowlas held her tongue. There was the creaking of stiff paper, as the lawyer arranged the document before him. And there was, here and there, a suppressed clearing of the throat, or a sigh of unconquerable impatience. But other sound (for a minute or so) there was none, save the droning of the flies in the window, and the rapping of a straggling rose branch outside, as the breeze blew it again and again upon the glass. Poor Eva, now feeling more out of place than ever, devoutly hoped that on no future occasion would such distasteful masquerading be thrust upon her. And in those moments of utter silence she made a vow that, as speedily as the interests of that poor Mrs. Roberts would permit, she would detach herself from the connection so strangely thrust upon her; would return to her house at Minchley, and—and perhaps resign herself by-and-bye to another home elsewhere. While Mr. Lewis was preparing to read, Miss March observed that Mr. Dowlas, now much more than his wife, looked agitated and frightened, as if some evil were coming.

In putting on his spectacles the lawyer let the case fall to the floor. Eva saw Mr. Dowlas rapidly pick it up and place it again in Mr. Lewis's hand. She could not help thinking that he had seized on this opportunity of saying a word which none but the lawyer might hear. One or two words he certainly whispered, which, near as she sat, she could not distinguish. She caught the professional gentleman's reply. He hastily said, “Certainly, certainly; you may rest assured. I won't say a word of it.” And then both their heads emerged above the level of the table, and the momentary episode ended.

The great revelation began:—

“This is the last will and testament of me, Owen Tudor Gryffyth, of Tremallyoc, in the county of Carnarvon, North Wales. I give, devise, and bequeath,”—and just at this moment, so seemingly big with disclosure, the document, as read by Mr. Lewis, meandered off into a tangle of particulars, which, for several sentences, baffled every effort at getting any possible acquaintance with the testator's intentions.

Mrs. Dowlas could bear it no more. And, in truth, more patient spirits than hers must many a time, and by such verbiage as this, have been very sorely tried.

“Gracious me, man! have done with all that jargon, and come to the point of the thing at once. Just in one word,—how much is it? and who is to have it?”

There was a murmur of counter-impatience in the room. Mr. Dowlas uttered a mild “My dear!” Mr. Lewis knocked his hand irritably on

the table. "Madam," he said, "this must be done according to form. A few minutes will put you in possession of all that there is for you to know."

"But there's no knowing anything with all that jingle and jangle of what's-their-names! I declare I don't know the very meanings of the words! I want you to come to the point! I desire that you come to the point! Morgan! if you are a man, and not a Jack-in-the-box only, say you insist that he comes to the point!"

Mr. Lewis made no more direct attempts on the reason of Mrs. Dowlas. Addressing her husband, while indignant protests resounded through the room, he said,—

"Mr. Dowlas, sir! may I beg of you to use your—your influence with your wife—with Mrs. Dowlas, I mean—to induce her to be patient for the time, the very *short* time, which it will take me to read this through as it is written, which you are aware I am bound to do?"

Poor unhappy Mr. Dowlas! He would a great deal rather have been called upon to capture and eject from the room a ferocious bull-dog, even of disputed sanity. But he could not shirk the demand now made of him. Not only Mr. Lewis, but the whole assembled company were looking for the desired service at his hands.

"My dear," he accordingly said, "I am afraid that this great agitation is scarcely good for your health, my dear."

"If my health couldn't bear a great deal, I shouldn't have been alive to come here to-day, after all I've had to endure at your hands—no!"

"Well, but you see, my love, unfortunately (though I admit it's an annoyance)—unfortunately all these preliminaries are necessary things; and the sooner we get them over, the less they can annoy us."

"Then get them over at once, you lout! Isn't that just all what I'm wanting?"

"What *you* are wanting, my dear Jane; and what we are all of us wanting besides. I am sure if you will just listen a little in patience, all the company will value the favour very highly at your hands."

And the poor man looked round the party, as much as to say, "Now do not, I implore you, do not say one word which might nullify my own submissive appeal."

In effect the reading of the will was resumed, and for the present without any more interruption."

The labyrinth of formalities was trodden, and the matter of real interest was attained.

More fortunate than Mrs. Dowlas, we may pass on to it at once.

To old Miss Tudor was bequeathed a handsome toilet-glass and nothing whatever besides. Sundry other articles of ornament and use (but not very many) were in like manner specially disposed of. Then came the legacies. Neither will you care to be dragged through every particular in this department. The name of Dowlas was long in coming. But at

length it came. And to the Reverend Morgan Dowlas, of Llynbwllyn Rectory, “whom I greatly esteem, and with whom I sincerely sympathize for the trials to which he is exposed,” were left *Two Hundred Pounds*. To each of the four children of the said Morgan Dowlas, *Four Hundred Pounds*.

But these, with all the legacies already recited, were only as crumbs from the rich man’s table. They touched not the main concern. They would not, by so much as one farthing, diminish the real estate. The ready money in the bank would almost cover them, and the whole personal property would be much more than sufficient for them. What was to become of the houses and lands, including that house in which they were all at this time assembled? This was what every one was burning to know. Mrs. Dowlas, by the very intensity of her feelings, was constrained to a silence in which genuine self-restraint could never have held her. All awaited the sentence which would dispose of the last and greatest of the matters in dispute. It presently came. None of all who heard it will ever forget the words read by Mr. Lewis at that time. He will never forget the reading of them.

“All my personal estate which shall remain over and above when the above legacies shall have been paid as by me directed, and when the duties for legacy shall, in each specified case, have been paid as required by law, and when all expenses attendant on the due carrying out of this my will and testament shall have been fully discharged,—all personal property so remaining I devise and bequeath to the person whom I name herein the inheritor of all my real estate. And all such real estate—consisting of certain lands and houses situate in Tremallyoc, certain lands within the adjoining parish of Tyn-w-curw, and also certain lands and houses situate in Llanbadder, in Flintshire—I give, devise, and bequeath, with my heartiest wishes that she may long and happily enjoy them, to *Eva*, until lately known, in ignorance of her parentage, as *Eva March*, but now discovered to be the long-lost daughter of my unfortunate connection, *Susanna Roberts*, the daughter of *David Roberts*, late of *Liverpool*, and therefore grandniece of my deceased stepmother, to be by the said *Eva Roberts* entered upon and enjoyed as soon as she shall have completed the age of twenty and three years.”

Such was the disposition which *Owen Gryffyth* had made.

The lawyer, of course, had known it all along; for the will had been drawn up by him. Mr. Dowlas had his reasons for thinking such an issue no improbable one on that day—the 29th of July—when he and his wife had paid their visit to Mr. Gryffyth at Tremallyoc; the old gentleman had straitly questioned him as to the appearance, manner, and behaviour of their newly and strangely discovered young kinswoman—our own *Eva*. To all such questions Mr. Dowlas, only caring to gratify his love of truth and his liking for *Eva*, had given her every praise which her dearest friends could have expected on her behalf. That she would be Mr. Gryffyth’s heir her imagined uncle considered a very likely thing. But

he dreaded lest his wife should gather any hint that he had suspected, nay, promoted the design. And his dread of that was the object of his eager whisper to Mr. Lewis when the will was just about to be read. But, with the exception of Messrs. Lewis and Dowlas, all who heard what Mr. Gryffyth had finally and actually decreed were as much astounded as it is possible to be. And one look of blank amazement overspread alike the countenances of all.

But though it could hardly be said that any one was more astounded than any other, there was one person present whose anger was beyond all comparison with anybody else's anger. Poor distracted Mrs. Dowlas! She verily turned pale. Wonders will cease out of the world never. And Mrs. Dowlas, for a moment or two, was actually pale. Very quickly she recovered the natural tint of her cheeks, and likewise her voice.

"I don't believe it! I won't believe it! It can't be possible! Why, he never saw her! He scarcely knew that there was any such person living! Mr. Lewis, it isn't in the will, and you're reading it all out of your own head; I know you are."

"You shall look and see for yourself, Mrs. Dowlas, if that is your opinion." And Mr. Lewis held the paper full before her face, at the same time keeping it firmly grasped in his own hands. If he did so to prevent her from seizing and tearing it in pieces, nobody, beholding her, could have considered the precaution as libellous and absurd.

Perhaps there was a little malice in the tone with which he asked her,—

"Well, Mrs. Dowlas, now what do you say? Is it as I read it? You can set me right if I am wrong."

"I don't care! It's a forgery!—a *forgery*, and you're at the bottom of it: you're the doer of it, and I'll have you hung!"

"By all means, Mrs. Dowlas, if you can persuade a judge and jury to take your view of the matter. Meantime, and until you have proof of such a thing, you are committing yourself to a somewhat grave accusation."

"I beg of you," here interposed Mr. Dowlas—"I beg of you, sir, to overlook my wife's somewhat hasty expressions. It has—it has taken her quite by surprise."

"Oh, Mr. Dowlas, say no more. I'm an old lawyer, and I know how great an allowance ought to be made for excited feelings on such occasions as the present. And I knew the impulsive character of your good lady's feelings at all times."

Mr. Dowlas's good lady seemed about to verify the last remark in some decided manner; but something or other broke down in her, and instead of speaking she could only sob. Mrs. Dowlas was in hysterics. There was a rush for cold water, and I know not what other things besides. Some of the party hung round the afflicted lady. The others began discussing the matter in which her affliction had its origin. In very truth it

bewildered all of them. Some of them had not been aware that Mrs. Roberts was supposed to possess a daughter. They had been asking who that pretty young creature that had arrived with the Dowlas party could possibly be, and what had caused her appearance in the gathering of that day. Those who had really heard of Mrs. Roberts's long-lost daughter had a very imperfect knowledge of the circumstances under which she had been lost, and then (as report said) found. They were acquainted with the folly and wickedness (folly in herself and wickedness in another) which had blighted the career of poor Susanna Roberts herself. They fancied that some charitable agency (personal or institutional) had reared her child for her; that the story of its having been born dead had been given out as a means of ridding her from vexatious inquiries; that the child now grown to the verge of womanhood had been sent to her rightful mother (whether to abide with her or not), and I doubt if Owen Gryffyth himself was ever aware of much more.

Mrs. Roberts, for aught her Welsh acquaintances could tell, might have been fully aware all along of the progress and condition of the child she had given out as dead from her birth. But that Mr. Gryffyth should have made that child his heiress was baffling to all calculation, and they all agreed that it was about the most unrighteous, unreasonable thing he could possibly have done. Many remarks were exchanged while poor Mrs. Dowlas was being recovered from her fit of hysterics.

"It's a very great misfortune," said Mrs. John Jones to Mrs. James Jones, "for such a girl as her to be left with so much money."

"A very dangerous temptation," said Mrs. James Jones in reply to Mrs. John Jones; "anything but a blessing to her. However, I must do her the justice to say that she doesn't look at all stuck up with it—that is, not at present."

"Stuck up! why, no, indeed: she looks a great deal more as if she were going to be tried for some robbery."

Indeed it was true. Eva not only looked, but felt in her inmost heart as though she were in the position of a thief. When first the mention of her name arrested her ear, a transient idea crossed her mind that the lawyer was making a game of her; that (with the possible concert of the Dowlases) he was taking this singular method of showing her that she had no right to be present at this family gathering. Then she saw with what perfect gravity he was reading, and what an outburst of amazement arose from every corner of the room. Then she was conscious that she had become the centre of attraction for every one present. She witnessed the furious outbreak of Mrs. Dowlas, and saw how it ended for the present. All these things passed before her, while she felt the power to speak or act to have utterly passed away from her. Then her senses emerged from bewilderment, and something within her was urging her to come forward promptly and decidedly.

"Speak!" her conscience appeared to say; "speak at once. Reveal

your actual position! Know you not that silence makes you a robber, and that on a most gigantic scale? A robber in the eyes both of God and of man?"

Exerting all her strength of mind, she addressed Mr. Lewis, who was seated with the fatal document still in his hand.

"Sir, I have something which I ought to tell you. I can never think of accepting this property. Indeed, it is out of the question altogether. It has been left entirely under a mistake; and I must explain to you—"

But Eva was here interrupted by the woman who believed herself to be her mother.

"Eva! Eva! consider, for mercy's sake, what you are doing. Do you really want to kill me?—Mr. Lewis, for the love of goodness, persuade her to do no such foolish thing."

"Be quite easy, Mrs. Roberts," Mr. Lewis replied. "It is not left in your daughter's power to do any such thing; which, as you well say, would be an exceedingly foolish one. She can't give up this property; and it'll be many a good long year before she can. She'll be very much wiser before that time comes; and there'll be (no doubt) another party by that time who'll have something to say in the matter. Let me finish what I have to read. I think the sooner it is read the better."

Evidently the lawyer was purposing to take advantage of the few precious minutes yet remaining ere Mrs. Dowlas could recover her entire senses, and with them her peculiar and terrible gifts of speech.

Eva would have persisted in her intended explanation, but a warning look and touch from Mr. Dowlas arrested her. He evidently wished to tell her that the agitation she was occasioning Mrs. Roberts was dangerous in the highest degree. Oppressive, intolerable almost as was the burden Eva now bore, it must not be got rid of at the risk of that poor creature's reason or life. She must postpone the disclosure which it would have so infinitely relieved her to make at once.

Mr. Lewis went on with the duty which remained to him. There was not much more. The will made arrangements as to trustees and cognate matters with which the reader need not and shall not be bothered. Moreover, it provided that Eva, until reaching the age of three-and-twenty, should receive an annual allowance of four hundred pounds, together with full permission to reside, under suitable arrangements, in Tremallyoc House; the needful expenses of housekeeping, including the maintenance of the whole establishment, gardens, and other adjuncts, being met out of the estate held in trust. Whether she married or continued single would make no difference as to the time during which the actual control of the property was to be withheld from Eva. The execution of the will was so formal and regular as to leave no chance of questioning on such grounds. Its date was the second day of August, exactly one week before the testator's death.

While Mrs. Dowlas was still slowly emerging from her eclipse, Mr.

Lewis was expounding, with all the minuteness due to so youthful an heiress, the exact position in which the will placed her. Everybody was envying Eva, while she was far the most unhappy in all that company. For, as Mr. Lewis continued speaking, a fear of the most terrible kind was taking possession of her. It really appeared as if she *could* not rectify the fearful mistake which had placed her in so singular a position. She might of course—and she surely would—refuse in any way to profit by it. But would the refusal restore the property to those (whoever they were) who, but for Eva, would have been left to enjoy it? Who, indeed, could recall a dead man from his grave, how great and fatal soever the ignorance in which he had died? Our heroine had paid little heed to all the talk about Mr. Gryffyth and his property which had been poured into her ears. Perhaps it showed how difficult it had been to unite herself in spirit and in interest with the relations who had unwarrantably claimed her; but even when believing herself to be indeed one of the Roberts family, she had never given a moment's voluntary thought to Mr. Gryffyth or to his property. But now, when the matter had become so suddenly her own concern, she reflected that the family, who still believed her to be one of them, had really some pretension to be Mr. Gryffyth's heirs, and, moreover, that in the absence of a will in their favour, the law would treat their claims as absolutely null. Now in what position would they be left, by her confession that the disposition in her favour had credited her with claims not truly her own? How would such confession affect the will itself? Would it become simply a piece of waste paper? or (which would be horrid indeed) would the estate abide with her,—the fruit of unintentional wrong-doing, and a burthen which she could not throw off?

For the sake of poor Mrs. Roberts she dared not just now acknowledge all. She hastened, however, to unburthen herself of the other distracting anxieties.

"Mr. Lewis," she said, "there are one or two questions I must ask you now. By-and-bye I shall have to tell you one or two other things. But there are a few things which it would relieve me very greatly to know. Will you kindly answer me them?"

"Most certainly, Miss Roberts. I am—I trust it will not displease you to be told so—your professional adviser. It's my duty to give you all the advice that you think proper to take. Any questions you choose to put shall have my best attention."

"I thank you greatly, sir. Well, did I understand you to say that I must take this property? I suppose I cannot give it away?"

"Not until you are three-and-twenty, no."

Eva considered that were she now of an age to dispose of the estate, it might have been possible to ascertain what (before her arrival in Wales) had been Mr. Gryffyth's intentions. And if the property were legally hers, she might then have bestowed it according to such intentions.

But more than four years must pass—for she could hardly consider

herself as born *before* March, 1838—ere such a purpose could be carried out by her.

She tried to put her next inquiry so as not to involve the disclosure she dared not make just now.

"Then, if you please, Mr. Lewis, I want to know, supposing—supposing Mrs. Rob—that is, my mother, had had no daughter: supposing, that is, that I had died, and Mr. Gryffyth in ignorance had made this will all the same, who would have the property then?"

"If you had died before the testator, the legacy (as we say) would have lapsed, and the will (as concerning all that is left to you) would have been void altogether, and the estate would have gone to the heir-at-law."

"It would not have gone according to any former will?"

"Not in this case, for there is no such will in existence. I saw Mr. Gryffyth destroy his previous will with his own hands. Had he not done so, then, in the case you suppose, such former will would have decided the succession to the estate."

"But as it is it goes to the heir-at-law? A nephew of Mr. Gryffyth, is he not?"

"Yes, the only nephew he ever had. My dear young lady, you're surely not tormenting yourself with the idea that you are wronging *him*? A most misplaced regret, I do assure you. In the first place, he is a very rich man already. Besides, poor Gryffyth would never have left it to him. Not but that a little attention from his nephew might have altered all. But that attention was never offered; and the estate was never likely to go in *that* direction. The gentleman owes none of his loss to you."

"Ah, but you little know—However, excuse my asking one other question. As I gather from what you say, that Mr. Gryffyth would, in any event, have left some will—to whom had he assigned this property *before* he left it to—as he has left it now?"

"Hm! well, my dear, that is not a question which it lies quite in professional duty to answer. I tell you what"—and here Mr. Lewis lowered his voice, and indicated to her to place her ear closer to him,—
"as you appear so unaccountably scrupulous about the whole matter, and are a young lady, I'll indulge you with a hint. If Mr. Gryffyth had never heard how worthy an heiress he might have if he chose, a certain gentleman"—here Mr. Lewis plainly indicated Mr. Dowlas—"would have had the lion's share; although a certain lady"—and it was evident that he meant Mrs. Roberts—"would have benefited largely also."

Eva's heart sank down within her. The more she probed the matter, the worse it appeared to prove; the more inextricable became the frightfully false position into which her well-meant concealment had brought her; the more certain the injury which, by assuming (or rather retaining) a name and position which did not belong to her, she had inflicted on others, who as yet were ignorant of their wrongs. And to continue the

deception for another hour was dreadful. But an immediate confession would probably (when poor Mrs. Roberts was considered) add virtual homicide to her undesigned robbery.

Eva was diverted from her present thoughts, but only to a certain extent, by the now complete recovery of Mrs. Dowlas. That lady was now rewarding the attentions which her seizure had won her, by snapping at all who surrounded her, and scornfully rejecting the advice they were apparently thrusting with some urgency upon her.

“I tell you I will have it out with her! I will have it out with her, if I die!”

Everybody present was quite aware with whom, though at the forfeit of her life, Mrs. Dowlas had announced her determination of having it out. And of all present there, none were half so unmindful of the attack as the person who was to constitute its direct object. Eva was now too bitterly self-reproachful to be greatly affected, though by the hardest and wildest reproaches of another.

Mrs. Dowlas confronted her and began,—

“You nasty thievish creature! You scandalous, murderous, larcenous, burglarious thing! To think of your coming in this way and taking the bread out of our mouths,—yes, out of our very mouths!”

“Mrs. Dowlas,” said Mr. Lewis, proffering for Eva the protection she seemed too slow in claiming—“Mrs. Dowlas, it might be as well if you would remember that you are in this young lady’s own house, and with no right to remain here but such as she pleases to accord you.”

“I don’t care! I don’t care! And do you think I wish to remain here? Do you think I don’t feel myself polluted every moment I breathe the same air with her? or that I’ll ever enter her doors again? No! I wipe” (and here Mrs. Dowlas wriggled her heels on the carpet in proof of it,—“I wipe the very dust from the boots of my feet; and if she stood at that window calling and bawling for me to come in, from the first of January to the thirty-first of December, why, I wouldn’t come in! No, sir, I wouldn’t!”

“Well, well, Mrs. Dowlas, of a certainty you are doing your very utmost to reconcile her to your absence.”

“You slimy reptile!” said the lady, again turning to Eva; “to think of your insinuating yourself into my uncle Owen’s good graces, and getting him to cheat the just expectations of other and better people, all for you!”

It was again the lawyer who replied. Eva sat down in the chair from which she had risen. Her thick veil was over her face, and her hands were clasped over her eyes. Whether she caught half the words levelled against her it would not be safe to say.

A murmur of “Shame” went round the room. Even those who felt themselves displeased with the will had no sort of sympathy with Mrs. Dowlas.

Miss Tudor (like that other maiden lady of her name and race, when she offered herself as godmother to Mary Stuart's son, and proved no such bad godmother in the end)—Miss Tudor came forward and offered Eva her stately congratulations. A few more of the company did the same. And now the room began to empty itself. But Mrs. Dowlas could not be got away quite so soon. She rallied herself for one more attack; and in that last onset there was a little more calculation and a little less of sheer passion than had marked the former engagement.

"Pray, Miss," she commenced, placing herself straight in front of Eva—"pray, Miss, now do you think that there is no such thing as *law* in the country? And do you think that, by giving me any part of this property—suppose we say ten thousand pounds,—you'd ever persuade me to be content, or not to expose the rascally roguery by which all this has been done? I tell you, no! I'll not take a sixpence out of your hands, there!"

Mrs. Dowlas paused, as if waiting an answer, as very likely she was. Eva possessed neither thought to frame nor breath to utter a reply. Her enemy was at her again.

"Now suppose you were to say to me as you sit there, 'Aunt Jane, you've a largish family and a smallish income; I have no family whatever, and have got a very large income; I'll take one, perhaps two of your children, my cousins, give them good education, and put them out in life with no expense to yourself at all,'—do you think I'd ever let my children be degraded by any such charity as yours? No! I'd whip them all to death one after another if they dared so much as to name the thing!"

Eva did not vary her attitude, and felt only like some one exposed to a howling storm of wind. Mrs. Dowlas went desperately on:—

"If you, now, were to say to me, 'Aunt Dowlas, I've heard it said that uncle Owen—Mr. Gryffyth—had some bottles of excellent rum in his cellar that I freely give to you; it'll comfort you many a time when you have the shiverings about you,'—do you imagine I'd ever take the paltry present at your hands? Before I'd touch a drop (if you sent it all the way to my house) I'd smash all the bottles in the street and let all the stuff run down the gutters! Good-bye! I hate you!"

And Mrs. Dowlas flounced and bounced out of the room. Her husband had already gone out to prepare for their return to Llynbwlyn. Just a few minutes after his wife's departure Mr. Dowlas re-entered the dining-room.

"Eva," he said, "believe me when I say that *I* am in no way displeased at what has occurred, and that I most heartily congratulate you. May you live long in the enjoyment of what has been given you to-day!"

Eva thanked him. He did not like her the less for the little of exultation she displayed.

"I presume," he said, "that as you are here already, and you have the choice of doing so, you will now remain here. I should strongly urge

your doing so, and so I think will Mr. Lewis. I fear my house has never been a very happy home to you, and now I fear indeed it would scarcely be a tolerable one."

"Can I remain here one night?" Eva asked. Unconsciously, she spoke as if those around her were aware already of her actual position.

"One night, Miss Roberts! All the nights and days—and I trust there are a good many of them—which yet remain to you on earth. Let me again explain to you that you have a right to *occupy* this house at once, though it will be some time before you have the full disposal of it.—Mrs. Roberts, you, I have no doubt, will take up your abode with your daughter, and then every possible objection is removed."

"You will stay here, Susanna?" said Mr. Dowlas.

"If my daughter will have me. Oh, Eva, haven't you got a word of welcome for your poor mother, vexed and afflicted as she has been? Surely you're not going to say that as I turned you out when you were born, so now you'll turn your back upon me? Oh, Eva, Eva! you know it was quite as much for your sake as my own that I did it! Say you won't cast me off! Do say I may live with you! Any corner of the house will content me, if you'll only let me live under your roof."

Eva felt her senses going. Every step took her further and further into the labyrinth of deceit, and laid up worse consequences to come of the inevitable disclosure. She felt a wild impulse within, urging her to leave the house and walk away anywhere—anywhere, never to meet with these people again.

"I don't know what to say. I don't, what I ought to say. If it were in my power—"

"Why, Miss Roberts," interrupted Mr. Lewis, "I surely do not understand you to say that you *object* to your mother's having a home with you here?"

Mr. Lewis looked seriously disapproving. He was evidently thinking, "What! the bad effects of sudden prosperity showing themselves already, and in a young woman whose first behaviour seemed so much to the contrary! This is rather startling, even for a lawyer!"

Eva saw the injustice she was doing herself; but she felt as helpless before the force of circumstances as a feather before the driving wind. It cut her to the heart to be suspected of thoughts so utterly alien from her.

"Indeed, indeed," she said, "I *wish* you to stay here. Indeed, I wish it were all your own. I am wretched to think it is not."

"There, there, Mrs. Roberts," exclaimed the lawyer, evidently glad to replace the heiress in his good opinion—"there, there, Mrs. Roberts, now you see you have an excellent daughter, as dutiful as she is beautiful. Don't fear but that she'll make you a very happy home here. You see she's just a little bewildered with all this unexpected good luck. I should recommend a good cup of tea and early bed, and, not to tease you any more, I'll now take myself off, and call to-morrow,—no, shall we say Satur-

day? If you want me in the mean time, pray send for me. I live at Brynwdwyn, you know. Good-bye for the present; and much—much happiness to you both!"

The lawyer was gone. Mrs. Dowlas's voice was heard screaming out for her husband with a number of opprobrious epithets, which (for want of space) we cannot set down.

He went away at her summons, and very soon the house held none save Eva and her mother. There was the best of accommodation ready for them, and their things would be sent from Llynbwllyn the next morning. A few articles for the night would be forwarded that very evening.

The falsely named Miss Roberts, now anxious to be quite alone, retired up-stairs on the plea of a headache. And the most rigid advocate for verbal truth would have scarcely called her to account for the excuse. The servants (there were just three of them) were very desirous, by assiduous attention, to gain her early and favourable notice. She accepted a cup of tea at the housemaid's hands; and long ere her usual hour she went to bed to try if she could rest. At least, she could think her position over without the fear of betraying herself by words or looks. She did think much and long, but the dreadful difficulty appeared to mock her more and more. She felt like one wandering in a labyrinth, with no hope of ever escaping out of its mazes. Of one thing she was certain. She must not keep the secret long. One only thing there was which could make her position worse, that was the divulging of the fact by some one speaking independently of herself. *That* would expose her to the horrible charge of wilfully intending to profit by a fraud. She had, indeed, a clear conscience; at least, what she had hitherto done had been done from the purest motives and in the very teeth of her own inclinations. It would not be hard to show that no inkling of Mr. Gryffyth's intentions was likely to have reached her. She must tell all the very next day, and trust to the good sense and forbearance of others to forgive her this great but innocent mischief.

The good sense of Mrs. Roberts! The generous forbearance of Mrs. Dowlas!

Eva thought on what manner of persons she was thus relying, and she despaired more and more. Yet she slept a great part of the night. Convicts will sleep on the eve of execution, and when the hammering up of the scaffold is audible in their cells. Eva slept until her usual hour of waking in the morning.

Mr. Gryffyth's motives for the unexpected disposal of his estate might, very likely, occur to you without our dwelling on them; yet we may briefly recapitulate them.

He lived hoping and hoping that his nephew would, one day or other, step forward and heal the breach between them. Mr. Gryffyth would have exacted no humiliating condition. The merest wish for a renewed intercourse would have been met, on his part, with restored affec-

tion in life, and the reversion of his estate after death. But time wore on, and the nephew, prospering in his own way, made no advance on his side. Owen Gryffyth was far too proud to expose himself to the chances of a cold refusal. He was a Dissenter, and his nephew a richly beneficed clergyman. He grew old in years, and received one or two signs within that the earthly tabernacle was failing him. Resolved that (in default of a reconciliation) his natural heir should not be his actual heir, the old Welshman considered what he should do. He greatly desired to benefit the Roberts family. He cherished the memory of his stepmother, the sister of Mr. David Roberts. She had (in marrying his father) delivered him from the dominion of a very cross aunt; and, though somewhat his father's inferior in station, had performed all her duties kindly and wisely. But, as he wearily considered, could he hope that either of her nieces would make a good use of his estate if they got it? Susanna was a fool; and her folly had left her in a very painful and doubtful position before the world. Jane, Mrs. Dowlas, was an intemperate vixen, to enrich whom would be almost a sin. Mr. Dowlas was an excellent man in himself, but to endow him with wealth would be to enrich his wife all the same.

They had four children, but Mr. Gryffyth felt the anomaly of passing over the parents for their sakes. Mr. Dowlas must have domestic difficulties enough. It would hardly be well to complicate them by making his children wealthy while he continued poor. Besides, was it likely that the children of such a mother would grow up qualified to adorn a higher position?

However, people must be taken as they stand. And some time towards the close of 1855 Mr. Gryffyth executed a will, bequeathing his landed property all to Mr. Dowlas, and charging it with an income of two hundred a year, to be paid for life to poor Mrs. Roberts. As time after time stories reached his ears of the behaviour of Mrs. Dowlas, and of the small control her husband exercised over her, Mr. Gryffyth felt very uncomfortable, and many a time envied those people who can die and leave nothing behind them. He was still disquieting himself, while feeling that very soon the matter would have passed out of his control altogether, when he heard that Susanna Roberts had, after all, a living daughter, and that that daughter was coming to Llynbwllyn.

On that day when Mrs. Dowlas had insisted on her husband's taking her to Tremallyoc, old Gryffyth, shutting out the lady from the conference, had asked many questions of Mr. Dowlas as to the new relation suddenly come amongst them. The good rector of Llynbwllyn gave to Eva all the praise he thought her to deserve. She was very beautiful; she had been thoroughly well educated, both in solid acquirements and ornamental accomplishments; she was a perfect lady, and fit for any station to which Providence might be about to call her. Withal she was most amiable in disposition, forbearing with the weaknesses of her mother, and winning the

grateful affection of her youthful cousins. Thus, with the utmost pleasure to himself, did Mr. Dowlas talk of Eva. And this was the good which Mrs. Dowlas got by the visit she *would* insist upon paying!

Left to himself, Mr. Gryffyth took note of what he had heard. He did not feel equal to seeing the young lady himself, but he could trust the sense and taste of his more than disinterested informant. Surely she was expressly created to rescue him out of the difficulty he so much and so often deplored. Here—as if by direct interference from the skies—was an heiress combining kindred with his deceased stepmother with every personal and moral quality which he could have desired. Is it surprising that ere the week was at an end, Owen Gryffyth had destroyed his former will, and duly signed that one which we have had the privilege of reading? Before the sun went down upon the day of his burial, a circle, widening from hour to hour, was talking of Eva as of the being in all their acquaintance the most to be envied. For she was beautiful and rich. And she all the while was wondering whether the night would close in on anybody who had a harder burthen than her own to bear.

When, on the following morning, she came down-stairs, she found Mrs. Roberts in the breakfast-room. It was as pleasant a room as you can fancy. But all the delights of the house were so many torments to poor Eva. She felt herself such a degraded impostor. Of all the company which had thronged the house the day before, there was not one who had not a somewhat better right to be there than she had. And they had all retired and left her to rule in the house alone.

She found but little comfort in her poor silly companion. Pre-occupied as her thoughts were, Eva could not but observe the change that sudden prosperity had made in the manner and look of Mrs. Roberts. The immense difference between herself and her fiery sister seemed now to have greatly diminished. She really looked self-asserting in her turn. The poor creature had actually stuck some trashy finery on to her dress; and the likelihood that the dreadful disappointment coming would throw her mind fairly off its balance arose before Eva's eyes, and filled her with a new and sickening dread.

Mrs. Roberts was talkative enough now.

"Well, my dear, dearest love, isn't it a great blessing that, instead of living any more with my sister Dowlas, and bearing all her shocking tantrums, we can live by ourselves in this delightful place? Ah, my dear girl! you'll forgive your poor mother freely now—now won't you? Eva, say you forgive me; say I shall always have a home with you!"

"Poor—poor woman! I will do my best, believe me."

"My dear, you shall never find me in the way. I know, after my shameful behaviour to you when you were born, I have no such right as other mothers may have. But it's proved the better for you in the end, and I am your mother after all. You don't intend to disown me, Eva?"

"Poor dear mother!—at least, I know of no mother *besides* you,—I'll

never cause you any pain which I can possibly help giving you. At least be sure of that."

"Then you'll let me stay with you here, and I shall be happy, I know. Oh, I can't tell what I should have done if I had had to go home with your aunt and uncle. Really, I think I must have gone and slept at the public-house. Your aunt is positively not safe just now,—*not safe*. I hear that the way she went on as soon as they got back to the Rectory yesterday was really awful, something quite awful. They tell me that she kicked the cat from the top to the bottom of the stairs, and threw Winifred's best bonnet on the kitchen fire. But my sister Dowlas has such strength of character, to be sure; such strength of character, that there are times when she really doesn't know what she does herself."

Eva had no moral or example wherewith to point this sketch of aunt Dowlas; and Mrs. Roberts went talking on:—

"But though she has behaved so badly to you, Eva, I hope you'll try to forgive her—to forgive her just enough to have her here to tea by-and-by, just to show her that it's *our* turn now, you know. We can show a much better set of tea-things than hers that she's so proud of. I've been looking over the things myself just now, and you've got a set—oh, I should think that every single cup in it must be worth the whole cost of my sister Jane's best; so I really should like her to see it."

And by-and-bye, to Eva's great satisfaction, the woman whom wealth had already changed went out to pursue her inquiries into the house and its treasures, and Miss March could consider what she had better do. Her hitherto ready resource, the counsel of Mr. Ballow, was not in this matter available. It was Friday now, and not before Sunday, if indeed so soon, could she obtain an answer to any letter she might send. Could she really defer proceedings until Monday? That would be three whole days. Three entire days passed in deceit and duplicity which sickened her more and more every minute. And could she doubt what Mr. Ballow would advise? He would counsel her to reveal all without delay. And would he not be certain to indicate Mr. Lewis as the person to whom the first revelation had better be made? The fearful mischief which had ensued from concealment was a warning to her to conceal no longer. Mr. Lewis had expressed himself ready to wait upon her if she desired that very day. She bitterly felt that in so much as requesting his presence she was acting on false pretences. For what real claim did she possess on his attentions? But it was the only honest course before her, and strength was given her to proceed with it. She wrote a short note, beseeching him to come to her that day, on very urgent matters arising out of Mr. Gryffyth's will. Mr. Lewis lived about five miles off. Eva's messenger was quickly home again with a note in reply. Mr. Lewis would wait upon Miss Roberts that very day, about two o'clock.

Eva wrote to the Ballows to tell them of the dreadful embarrassment which had overtaken her, and of her hope that the lawyer's assistance

might guide her to some honest escape from it. She also wrote to Richard. Her immediate anxiety was to keep Mrs. Roberts from assisting at the coming interview. This it proved easy to do. After a very early dinner the latter lady went out on a gossiping visit to one or two families with whom she had some acquaintance. And she was a mile away from the house by the time the lawyer arrived.

He was very cordial and animated. Eva was by far the most interesting client he had had for many and many a long year; and he greatly rejoiced to think into what hands Tremallyoc House had fallen.

Eva thought she must offer him a glass of wine. Poor girl! she could not even do that without a guilty feeling that she was robbing Mr. Gryffyth's real heir. They sat in the breakfast-room aforesaid,—he with his glass in his hand, she nervously fingering her watch-guard, deferring the inevitable plunge, and (as we are wont to do) suffering it many times over in consequence. Her hesitation was much too manifest to be passed unnoticed by him.

"Well, Miss Roberts, you see I have been prompt in coming. In what way can I serve you? Now I think I can guess—I think I can guess. There's a gentleman in question, I fancy? Don't be angry if I am wrong. But am I not right?"

"It's not that,—that is—it is not for that I wished to see you. I assure you, Mr. Lewis, I wouldn't have troubled you if I could have avoided it."

"Why, I begin to be afraid you've taken a dislike to me, Miss Roberts. The oftener you send for me the better I shall be pleased."

"I can only thank you for coming with all my heart. You cannot know what trouble I am in, Mr. Lewis. I believe you have heard how strange a history mine has been?—how I grew up under the care of one who protected me out of charity, and without any knowledge of my real parents?"

"Hm! to a certain extent I—I *have* heard it," replied Mr. Lewis, who, if he could avoid it without a falsehood, would never confess to ignorance.

Eva went on,—

"A short time ago I was led to believe—I most solemnly assure you I *did* believe—that Mrs. Roberts was my mother. A little while ago I received from my nearest and dearest friends positive proof that it was entirely a mistake; that—in short, that I am not Mrs. Roberts's daughter, and, as you will see at once, have no possible claim to the property left me under that name."

"Is it possible? Miss Roberts, you're surely under some delusion!"

"I *was* under a delusion indeed. But if you look at this letter, which was written by Mr. Dowlas only six weeks ago, you will see that I really had every reason to think myself his niece. And then if you look at this other letter, which I myself received some days ago from Mr. Ballow (he is

one of the friends of whom I spoke just now), you will see how thoroughly all the proofs in the former letter are set aside."

Mr. Lewis took the two letters in hand,—to wit, Mr. Dowlas's letter to Mrs. Ferrier (transcribed by us in chapter the sixth), and the letter from Mr. Ballow, telling Eva of his interview with Madame Durange, and the consequent certainty that Mrs. Roberts's daughter had died in her infancy. For many minutes the lawyer was perusing, comparing, and weighing the two important documents, together with the papers procured by Mr. Ballow to make his case a certain one.

At length Mr. Lewis returned them into Eva's hand.

"Well, Miss Roberts—Well, Miss March, I ought to say,—this is a very complicated matter, to be sure. It is much to be regretted that you did not make known the contents of this letter of Mr. Ballow's as soon as you received it.

Eva now had to tell him her motives for hiding the truth. She was glad to see that he did not appear to distrust her.

"Miss March," he said, "I fully believe you. As to your designing to get this property, why, no one knows better than I do how very close my old friend Gryffyth kept his intentions; and I know it was impossible, since he never so much as saw you, that you could have been expecting such a thing. But I cannot promise you that you will meet with like justice from everybody concerned."

"No indeed, Mr. Lewis. I dare say you are thinking of Mrs. Dowlas. You saw what her anger was when she had no idea I had anything to hide from her. What will be her fury when she becomes aware that she has lost the property through one who had never the remotest connection with her!"

"Why, Miss March, I am not so sure but that, when she discovered she really *had* a grievance against you, she might hate you all the less. It would give her a certain sense of superiority. However, you are right in thinking that the shock may be very dangerous to that poor weak Mrs. Roberts. We must use the utmost precaution. Of course I now understand what yesterday puzzled me very much, in the remarks you made and the questions you asked."

"And now, Mr. Lewis, tell me, I entreat you, if there be any way in which this fearful mischief can be undone."

Mr. Lewis thought a little before he spoke again.

"I see only one resource," he said; "clearly, but one. You are already aware that, there being no such person as the daughter of Mrs. Roberts, all the property (not specified in the will) must come to the heir-at-law, who happens also to be the next of kin. What you desire is that something should be done for the benefit of Mrs. Roberts, and also for the Dowlases. That, I conclude, is the thing?"

"Yes, most certainly yes."

"And you will see directly, that if such a thing is to be done at all,

the heir-at-law and no one else must be trusted to do it. The question for us is, Will he do it? Will he, seeing that he benefits himself so largely by this strange mistake? Will he be generous to those who, on the other hand, have *suffered* so largely by it?"

"I suppose he cannot be *bound* to do anything?"

"By no means. You can only appeal to his generosity. And I should recommend your doing it *in person*. It's a somewhat singular proceeding, I am aware. But the whole affair is singular from beginning to end; and it would be far the best way for *effect*."

"But who is he? and where does he live?"

"I am sorry to say that he lives a very great distance from here. About halfway between Cambridge and Isly. He is a clergyman, as you may be aware. His name is *Leyburn*—the Reverend Henry Leyburn. It ought to be in our favour that he has got a splendid living, and is very well off in other ways."

"But would you advise my going there myself?"

"Yes, I should, I do. With a proper escort, of course. Have you no friend who would go with you?"

Eva thought of Mrs. Check, and said she had a friend in London. She thought it would be selfish to ask so singular a service from Mrs. Ballow.

"Very well. Then stay here quietly till Monday. Don't fancy yourself an intruder. When Mr. Leyburn finds that you are the cause of his inheriting Tremallyoc after all, he will not grudge you a few nights' rest in it. Say not a word to anybody here; and on Monday I'll see you safe at Chester and off by the train. Then write to your friend to meet you in London, and take you down into Cambridgeshire on the Tuesday. Tell Mr. Leyburn the whole at once. Of course, if he won't make any concessions, why, you can only fall back on the knowledge that you did your best and meant your best all the matter through. And now, my dear, good-bye. I do feel very sorry that this house is not to be yours—only don't you tell Mr. Leyburn of my saying so. Just another thing: have you plenty of money?"

"Yes, ample. And my friends at Minchley will supply me with any more I may need."

"Very good, only don't be backward in asking me if you really want any. I'll make such explanations here and at Llynbwllyn as may be needed. Nothing more reasonable than when a young lady has money left her, she should be called to travel up to London."

And then Mr. Lewis went away.

Of Eva's doings for the next two days we need only say that her heart was very much lightened, anxious as it still continued. She could not go to the church on Sunday, for it involved the sitting, as owner of the manor, in the great Tremallyoc House pew. On Saturday she had written both to Mrs. Ballow and to Richard of the new enterprise now before her.

About the middle of Monday she found herself handed into the train for London by Mr. Lewis at Chester. They had quitted Tremallyoc early in the morning. Eva felt very desolate and not a little unhappy. It seemed as if she were again and again to be driven about, the world affording her no resting-place. But she lived to view this journey in a very different aspect by far. There was a thread of light in the labyrinth she was compelled to tread. Through all the varying currents which drove her hither and thither there was an over-mastering tide sweeping all in one direction—undoing wrongs of which, as yet, she was not aware,—and guiding her back to the hearts of her long-lost parents, and to the discovery of her rightful home.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD; ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND PROSPECTIVE CHANGES.

BY AN M.A. OF "THE HOUSE."

CHRIST CHURCH in 1866 would be described by the naturalist as in the "chrysalis" state; by the geologist, architect, or antiquarian, as in "transition;" and by the reader of "Sinbad" as shuffling off the old-man-of-the-sea, and entering upon the period of emancipation, economy, and common sense. And so rapid have some of the later changes been, that—on the extraction of these notes from the drawer in which they had been "folded away" during the temporary incapacity and subsequent distraction of "the hand that had written them"—it was found that some of the "prospective changes" had become "present," and some of the present "past." Consequently, without attempting to emulate the enterprising individuals who melt up dowdy wax dowagers into beautiful *Müllers* and fascinating *Townleys*, we are compelled to run our literary bell-metal into a fresh mould—after the manner of Mr. E. B. Denison, Q.C., *campanarum fusorum facile princeps*.

Premising first, then, that the expression "changes past" is meant to apply only to the changes of the past ten years, we dip forthwith into a "change past" of social and philological interest.

Those formerly familiar with "King Henry the Eighth's College of Christ in Oxford" will remember a certain word, simple in appearance, but of import large, which obtained much within those classic walls. That phrase compressed was "*squib*." But within the last ten years this curious monosyllable has fallen gradually into desuetude; and now, in this year of grace One thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, it has become necessary to explain, not only to those whom our Cambridge brethren call "*non-gremials*," but to "*gremials*" also (and probably even to many modern Christ Church men themselves), that the simple seeming "squib" was a phrase of pregnant meaning—a phrase used, in fact, by the privileged Christ Church man to designate any member of the university not a member of the inviolable and exclusive "House." Thus even professor-canon "imported from other colleges" were regarded by some of the stricter sticklers amongst the old students as "squibs," and as squibs *detestabilissimi* who, in their persons, intruded Squibarchy into those sacred precincts within which it was to be desired that Elizaarchy should alone prevail. And this now happily defunct feeling of the seniors ran incomprehensibly through the junior members of the "house"—to whom all "archies" were alike objectionable—when they took the trouble to think about them at all, which was seldom. Christ Church men admitted

that there were men belonging to the university besides the "members of the house." They met them at the schools, on the river, on Bullingdon, and on Cowley. But of "nineteen colleges and five halls" they knew nothing. So far as they were concerned, the university was dichotomized into "Christ Church men" and "squibs."

But *tempora mutantur*, and the free introduction of out-college men "under the ordinance of 1858" has caused the extinction of the name of "squib;" and with the name the feeling which gave it birth. "Squib" has now gone to lengthen the already long list of glossary-needing words. Its etymology and enodation we leave academic philologists to determine, for was not Max Müller himself a sort of semi-Christ Church man? Our present purpose is fulfilled by recording among "Christ Church changes past," that, though a certain much-modified feeling of exclusiveness still no doubt exists, the supercilious *sobriquet* of "squib" is practically extinct.

Before coming to further changes, one word of explanation here for the benefit of readers not academic. The phrase "the house," hitherto put in inverted commas, is a phrase used by members of Christ Church, and sometimes by others, to indicate the particularity of Christ Church as not simply a cathedral, as not simply a college, but as the "*ædes Christi*," "the house," *per se*, amongst the numerous "collegia" of Oxford. With this interpretation we drop the inverted commas and proceed.

Our next "change" has reference not to terms, but to the cathedral—the *ædes ædium* itself. Ten years ago the services of both college and cathedral were conducted in a small and consequently overcrowded portion of the building, the nave being used only for the university sermons when the canons preached, and as a sort of ante-chapel for strangers on Sunday afternoons. But soon after Dr. Liddell became dean he removed the organ to the south transept, set back the screen to the last bay of the nave, and thus made the nave available for the use of members of the house, and threw open the commodious north transept for the use of strangers. The space thus opened up was seated roughly with some old fittings; and though nothing further has yet been done, it is intended in course of time to replace the present make-shift fittings by proper seats and stalls. Within the last few years, too, the elaborate perpendicular vaulting of the choir, the beautifully carved pendants brought from Osney Abbey, and the fine hanging figures in the canopied niches of the choir arch—encrusted by numerous coats of *quasi*-churchwarden whitewash—have all been scraped and restored. Many minor alterations and restorations have been made, and the cathedral is gradually coming more and more into order. Whether the greatest of all requisite restorations—the lengthening of the nave—will ever be made we cannot say, but such is "a consummation devoutly to be wished." Our archæological readers know that Wolsey contemplated the absolute removal of the cathedral,

and the erection in its place of a splendid structure, worthy of the great college he intended to build, and fit for the accommodation of his "dean, sub-dean, 100 canons, 100 scholars, 6 public professors, 4 lecturers, 13 chaplains, 12 clerks, 16 choristers, 4 censors, 7 stewards, and 26 servants." In furtherance of his design the cardinal got just so far as to pull down the four western bays of the cathedral and the western side of the cloisters, when further progress was arrested by his own downfall in 1529.

The eastern side of "King Henry the Eighth's College" was produced over the site of the four demolished bays; and generations of Regius Professors of Divinity have thus been living in part of St. Frideswide's Church. Wolsey's designs were never carried out; and the age of cathedral building, in England at least, is past. Yet as the number of canons is being reduced from eight to six "under the ordinance of 1858," it would seem now to be possible to remove part of the Regius Divinity Professor's house, and to restore the four bays of St. Frideswide's. The pillars might be alternately cylindrical and polygonal like those now existing; and, as the present cathedral is made up of almost every style of architecture, there would be no incongruity in having the west window and doorways in keeping with the western facing front of "Tom Quad"—with which the western front of the cathedral might be made flush. Whether this will be ever done we cannot say; but it is evident that should this be one of the prospective changes, it would be a change vastly for the better. We may just notice here, quite by the way, the recent erection of a magnificent range of buildings where formerly stood the barrack-like "Fell's Buildings" and the tumble-down "Chaplain's Quad," and the wonderful consequent improvement in the appearance of Christ Church as seen from "the Broad Walk."

So much, then, as regards the material building. Let us now return to the point from which we digressed—the services held therein.

Up till the year 1862 the College Prayers—*i. e.*, the service attended by the undergraduates, censors, tutors, dean, and sub-dean—were read entirely in Latin. The so-called service consisted of (so to speak) a solo by the officiating chaplain, and a quartett in the responses by the dean, the sub-dean, and the two censors. The undergraduates stood absolutely mute as an almost general rule, and the substitute for devotion on their part appeared to be a mild desire, not often gratified, of hearing the *Lector*, or one of the four *Respondentes*, stumble over some such outlandish word as "*Hagarenorum*" or "*monocerotis*." These "Latin Prayers" the dean abolished at Christmas, 1861; and at the same time he put an end to a second service in Latin, hitherto held daily, in term time, at 9.15 p.m. In place of these two Latin services there are now held two short English services, one at 8 a.m., the other at 5.45 p.m. Whether there is more than one opinion as to the desirability of exchange-

ing the Latin for English services we cannot undertake to say; but that the substitution of the 5.45 p.m. service for the 9.15 p.m. service is a most happy "change" there can be no doubt. Whatever may have been the origin and intent of the 9.15 p.m. Latin service, there is no question but that of late years it had come to be a simple instrument of punishment, and its abolition removed a reproach upon the religious feeling of the house. We cannot say that the eight o'clock service has yet assumed a very devotional tone; but every member can join in the service now *if he will*, which he could not always do before, and so the character of the service may gradually change for the better.

We come now to changes in the "*cathedral service*." Ten years ago the services of the cathedral were conducted by chaplains who *read* the prayers and versicles, the choir *chanting* the *responses* and *Amens*. When first we knew the cathedral, one or two of the then eight chaplains managed to monotone the Litany and Prayers, but if any of their number could inflect, they did not. Most of the chaplains appointed by the present dean have received a special musical education; and, in consequence, the "priest's part" at the Christ Church Cathedral services is now often intoned as well as—and perhaps better than—in any other cathedral or collegiate church in England. It is true that for a long time the rest of the choir did not make parallel progress; but several improvements have lately been effected by providing additional attendance of men's voices, and so forth: other improvements are contemplated, and it is hoped, with some confidence, that before very long the Christ Church "cathedral service" will become a credit to the House and to the University.

Another point deserving mention among "cathedral changes" is this. Till very recently, the dean, canons, chaplains, organist, singing men, and choristers dropped in and took their places promiscuously—the dean and canons only entering by the screen door, the rest coming casually and inconstantly in through a little wicket side door. The canons, chaplains, and choir now assemble in the Lucy Chapel, and in the south aisle of the choir, a few minutes before the hour of service. When the clock strikes, the organist plays a short voluntary, the clergy and choristers move quietly down the south aisle in procession, enter by the screen door, and take their respective places "decently and in order."

There is now being tried a further change, which may be called a "change present." It seems that in 1865 a goodly number of undergraduates petitioned the dean to have a weekly instead of a monthly communion. This request has been complied with, and the Sunday arrangements of the college cathedral services in term time are at present as follows:—On the first Sunday in the month, "Morning Prayer, Litany, and full Communion service at 8 a.m." On the intermediate Sundays, "Communion at 7.30 a.m." and "Morning Prayer and Litany at 9 a.m."

The old four o'clock Sunday service is now fixed at five o'clock, in accordance with the modern practice of getting as much *day* as possible out of twenty-four hours. Whether the nine o'clock service will answer we cannot pretend to say. Its consideration trenches upon the question of the "University Sermon" which has been lately debated with so much acrimony by gentlemen who ordinarily live peaceably and quietly together. Into this question we have neither the time nor the inclination to enter; but we are constrained to give utterance to a feeling entertained by many members of the university, that any arrangement of college services which throws the college breakfast-time nearer to the parish church-time, and thus lessens the college servants' opportunity of preparing for church, must be very fruitful in good results to justify the change. The "College Servant Church Question" is one with which the university as a body will have to grapple sooner or later; but it is one with which we have no present concern here. However, the recent change at Christ Church is only an experiment, and it is too early as yet to pronounce upon its merits.

With regard to cathedral "changes to come" we have heard a rumour—though whether well or ill-founded we cannot say—that the canons are about to take a part in the ordinary week-day services of the cathedral, a thing that has not been done within the memory of the "oldest inhabitant" of the house. True, the diligent digester of Blue-books may point to page 772 of the appendix to the "First Report of her Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the state of cathedral and collegiate churches in England and Wales;" and true, again, he will there find this passage:—"II. MINOR CANONS.—The eight college chaplains share with the dean and canons the duties of the church;" but, as yet, the canons' "share" has consisted of reading the Communion Service on Sundays and saints' days only. Of course, no blame is attached to the present canons, who have hitherto only followed the custom prevailing when they came; and if the rumour we have quoted proves correct they will deserve credit for breaking through a custom which, however long established, would be more honoured in the breach than the observance.

There is one other prospective cathedral change which we hope to live to chronicle. Those who knew Christ Church a few years ago knew, if they ever gave it a thought, that the older servants of the house—those whose career of college service had run through the second quarter of the present century—founded themselves upon two celebrated Christ Church dignitaries, now no longer in the flesh, whose like will never more be seen by the present generation, whatever may be in store for our descendants in the predicted revival of the charcoal days, when the pits of Newcastle and Moira shall be effete, and Dudley and Durham shall be deserted ruins. Well, till about 1864 the cathedral of Christ Church was under the all but absolute guardianship of one of these ancient and amiable servitors, who had two

chief pleasures. One was to keep all people by all means out of the cathedral, unless on a certain condition, precedent or subsequent, expressed or understood. The other was to turn out and lock out, as soon as possible after admission, every one he could, on whatever condition the entrance had been obtained. And one other peculiarity had this venerable man. He always "took his orders from the dean," and sometimes a long way "from" that dignitary. In fact, these "orders" were not unfrequently of the same nebulous nature as were the "errands" performed by Mr. Silas Wegg on behalf of "Miss Elizabeth and Master George, Aunt Jane and Uncle Parker,"—fabulous forerunners of Mr. and Mrs. Boffin, in the mansion at the corner of the square. More frequently they had some slight foundation, as in the following instance.

About the year 1860 there was some disturbance in the nave and transept of the cathedral, during service, one Sunday afternoon in term; and as this disturbance turned out to have been caused by "strangers" leaving the building after the anthem, the dean, it was understood, gave an order that the cathedral doors should be closed from the commencement to the close of service. Every one but the officious gentleman, who "took his orders from the dean," interpreted this to mean that the doors were to be so closed *on Sunday afternoons* only. And this we believe now. But our janitor was a shrewd and sagacious man, and in this order—applying, as is supposed, one-fourteenth of the time occupied weekly by the cathedral services—he saw a tide which, taken at the flood, might lead on to fortune. And no doubt a fortune he might have made had this bright idea occurred to him earlier in his vergiferous career. His place now knows him no more. As it was, he "took the order from the dean" in its widest (and shall we say "unnatural"?) sense; and from that day till the day of his death he locked the doors of Christ Church Cathedral morning and evening, Sunday and week day, from the beginning till the end of the service; and his successor appears to keep up the custom upon the principle of *quieta non movere*.

But it is not all so quiet as it seems, nor anything like it. There is a deal of grumbling (to use a mild term) every day in the cloisters quad, on the part of strangers and foreigners—otherwise "lions;" but as the authorities are all inside when the door is locked, and as the doors are opened a minute or two before they come out, it seems as if all was well; and every one knows that it is (usually) good to "let well enough alone." But not so in this particular case, we think; and we feel that the unusual usage has only to be known to be at once abolished. The reason why so little of this has been hitherto heard is that the foreigners and strangers, the "lions" and "lionesses," who visit the cathedral only wish to visit it once. They have been deprived of hearing the service in Christ Church; they have unlocked the doors with the silver key, and have seen what there is to be seen. True, they talk of the *Times*, and so on; but in Oxford one

architectural beauty succeeds another so rapidly that their attention is soon taken off the cathedral and its closed doors. So, too, when they come to the end of their sojourn, or strike the balance between the pleasures and the annoyances of their visit to Oxford, the latter kick the beam; the verger is "let off," and the doors remain closed. As we said just now, we feel that, to be remedied, this abuse needs but to be known.

Other departments of the house have been made hateful in the same way; but the various old-men-of-the-sea have gradually dropped off, and their places have been filled by civil and obliging officers.

From the cathedral, or "College Chapel," as a late generation of authorities affected to call St. Frideswide's, to the Hall, the Buttery, and the Kitchen, is a short and easy step. Here, too, are to be mentioned "changes past, present, and prospective,"—of which in their proper order.

The many recent commissariat changes appear at first to be changes "past;" but they are really more in the nature of changes "present," and we will treat them so accordingly. The only particular change "past" is in the Hall itself. Those who only recollect Wolsey's noble hall in its say) ante-1860 state—when the bosses and solid oak roof and paneling were indiscriminately covered with thick coats of dirty snuff-coloured paint; when half a dozen dons dined in darkness in the empty upper half of the hall, and the rest of the House, crowded as close as sheep in a pen, dined in darkness visible in the lower half; when the triple-headed brass candlesticks shed little light and much wax over the bath-towel tablecloths,—when the *coup d'œil* was as much like Belshazzar's feast as possible; those who recollect the Hall at that time will appreciate the "change" that has been effected in its appearance. The whole of the dirty paint has been cleaned off, and the fine old oak once more revealed. The bosses have been properly painted; the coats of arms elaborately emblazoned; the wainscot well cleaned, oiled, and varnished; and the pictures restored, rehung, and, where necessary, glazed. In passing we are bound to add that we cannot say much for the rehanging part. This seems to have been left to the cleaner. But, over and above all these restorations of existing features and ornaments of the building, an entirely new and (in every sense of the word) brilliant feature has been added. The old Belshazzar candelabra have been relegated to the lower regions, and the Hall is now lighted by a continuous row of gas jets, which follow the string course of the building itself. The effect of this new mode of lighting is exceedingly good, though we doubt if the most has, as yet, been made of the idea.

For some few years past all graduate members of the House have dined above the salt—above the two fireplaces, that is to say, at Christ Church,—and the crush at the lower end of the Hall is relieved. Thus, altogether, the Hall has been revolutionized as regards its permanent appearance.

Whether the commissariat changes are equally indubitable improvements is not quite so certain 'yet awhile. Our own impression is that a little too much of the old leaven still remains. It is quite true that till very lately the Augean stable, the commissariat, of Christ Church remained without much effort being made to cleanse it. Still those who know what already has been done in other departments, and the complex and conflicting circumstances under which other reforms have been effected, will wonder at the delay in dealing with the commissariat question less than will those who judge without a knowledge of these circumstances.

Whether or not the wholesome but unsavoury task of cleansing the commissariat might have been earlier undertaken concerns us not now to inquire. A "present change" is being tried, and to see how far that change is good constitutes our present purpose.

But before we can see this we must go back a little—to the old-man-of-the-sea period. And here we must say that the letters in the *Times* last autumn, graphic as some of them were, failed to give more than the faintest idea of the marvellous system of mismanagement (we use the word "system" advisedly) which, during successive ages, had been allowed to grow up, fungus-like, around what was once, perhaps, a healthy state of things. Those who read the letters in the *Times* about the Hall dinners at Christ Church will recollect the statement that the pewter hot-water plates were "under" one official; that the heating of the water was in the department of a second; that the putting it in the plates belonged to the duty of a third; and that the quantity to be heated appertained to the province of a fourth. To this we will add, merely by way of corroboration, that the knives used to be under A, the forks under B (this so far was rational enough), the spoons under C, the salt under D, the pepper under E, the cayenne pepper under F, the mustard under G, the pounded sugar under H, the vinegar under I, the Chili ditto under J, the catsup under K, and the pickles under nobody. We will not say for certain that no two of these condiments were in the department of the same person; but our statement gives a generally correct idea of the state of things; and it is a matter of fact that no member of the House, graduate or undergraduate, nobleman or servitor, could have obtained a shalot with his steak, or a walnut with his chop, for any amount of love or money. Whether he can do so now or not we do not know.

As the old tariff, "the work of a late censor," has now become a matter of Christ Church history; and as we happen to have a copy of it before us, we will try to give our readers a glimpse of the grievances which produced the now famous manifesto of the undergraduates in Michaelmas Term, 1866.

To begin, then, in the order of the day with "breakfast." For this meal the old tariff stood thus:—

	s.	d.
" * Commons of bread	0	2
* Commons of butter	0	2
Fresh eggs, each (1)	0	1½."

"Fresh eggs each 1½d." applied, be it noted, to June equally with December; so that eggs bought wholesale in the spring and summer at twenty-four a shilling returned the modest profit of two hundred per cent. That there was any corresponding loss on the winter eggs is absurd. No one in the town of Oxford, in the depth of winter even, ever gave *more* than three-halfpence for an egg; and we must recollect that college head servants were regarded as wholesale tradesmen, and bought at wholesale tradesmen's prices. The "commons of bread," too, was often bad, and the "commons of butter" worse; so bad, in fact, generally, that the "scouts" usually took both bread and butter away untouched—the appetites of the youthful "academic aristocracy" being appeased by coffee and buttered toast from "Hinton's," together with some of the "following articles," which were supplied from the KITCHEN at the prices affixed:—

	s.	d.
" * Commons of cold beef	1	0
* " ham	1	6
* " brawn	1	0
* " tongue	1	6
* Small meat pie	1	6
* Pigeon pie	2	0"

The asterisks mean, as is explained in a note, that "gentlemen may order half-commons if they choose." As, however, the whole commons weighed about four ounces, we never heard of any one sufficiently sparrow-like in the matter of appetite to order a "half-commons." As a matter of fact, "double commons" was more frequently the order of the day.

But to proceed.

Besides the articles enumerated above, the lucky member of the House might have obtained—

	s.	d.
" Half a cold fowl	1	6
Single chop	0	6"

Now at the first blush these two items seem reasonable enough; but it should not be forgotten that the "half cold fowl, 1s. 6d." was, as of necessity, accompanied by the "commons of ham, 1s. 6d.," as above—which made the breakfast item three shillings *for meat alone*.

Coming now to "luncheon," we find here again our old friends of the morning in all their pristine simplicity:—

" * Commons of bread	2d.
* Commons of butter	2d."

with the addition of—

" * Commons of cheese	2d."
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These items are strong enough; but what shall we say of the next—unrelieved by any asterisk?—

" Commons of beer	4½d."
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Now a "commons of beer," is certainly not *more* than a pint—say that it is a pint imperial for the sake of argument. On the very best Burton ale there would be a fair margin of profit, though nothing extravagant; but under the *genus* "beer" was included sundry *species*; notably a poorish "porter,"—bought wholesale at from a shilling to sixteen pence a gallon; and also an article euphemistically called "home-brewed," for the sake of commendation, which betrayed its indisputable identity with the mild ale of a well-known firm of Oxford brewers, which is to be bought in the town *retail* at one shilling per gallon, and to be bought cheaper still wholesale, thus leaving to the wholesale buyer retailing at 4½d. per pint, some slight margin even over the fine old-fashioned profit of two hundred per cent.

For "luncheon" the kitchen supplied (in addition to the beef, ham, &c., mentioned under the head of breakfast) the following articles:—

	s.	d.
" Half a duck	1	9
Sandwiches	1	0 "
Cost of "Sandwiches, 1s. 0d. :"—		
Bread	0	0½
Butter	0	0½
Meat	0	2½
Pepper, mustard, and salt	0	0½
Total	0	4

Here again the grand old two hundred per cent.

For "dinner in hall" the old butler's tariff was as follows:—

	s.	d.
" Commons of bread	0	1
„ butter	0	1
„ cheese	0	1
„ beer	0	4½
„ cider	0	4½
„ shandygaff	0	6 "

(Cost of "Shandygaff, 6d. :"—beer, 1d.; ginger beer, 1d.; total, 2d.)

	s.	d.
" (Reputed) quart bottle of beer, stout, or cider	0	10
„ pint ditto	0	6 "

Having thus run cursorily through the old tariff, what strikes us as

the oddest thing of all about it is, that it is dated October 14th, 1864. It was drawn up, as we were told in the *Times*, by "a late censor;" and at the time, was no doubt looked upon by its author as an achievement of finality, although he has told us he did not bargain for being remembered in after days "as the author of a tariff." If then the new *carte* was brought out as a rectifier of previous abuses and overcharges, we are nearly overcome with silent awe.

The commissariat arrangements have now all been again recast. Their readjustment was, no doubt, accelerated by the somewhat peremptory demands of the undergraduates in Michaelmas, 1865. Still there is no valid reason to doubt but that the same hand which, in spite of divers drawbacks and difficulties, had already done so much towards reforming Christ Church, both as a member of the University Commission, and as dean, would ere long have attacked the corrupt commissariat, even though unbidden by the somewhat imperative demand upon his "immediate attention." But this is by the way.

The great present changes in the commissariat are—1. The entire abolition of the office of "manciple." 2. The creation of a new officer, a student—"steward," or bursar. 3. The abolition of profits made by the butler and cook—both of whom are paid a fixed salary. 4. A general lowering of the tariff; and 5, the introduction of the system of "weekly bills."

Whatever may have been the duties of "manciple" in times gone by, there is no doubt but that his sole function of late years has been to buy the very cheapest articles of food for the Hall dinner, and retail them for consumption at Christ Church at the highest prices current for the best articles. The manciple's place no longer exists; and if, under the new system, the members of the house should not chance to get their food cheaper, they will doubtless get a better quality. They could not get a worse.

If there be any remainder of the office of manciple, it is now held by the cook, who retains his office at a fixed salary. The butler too, shorn of his giant strength, is now content to "grind in the prison-house" at a reasonable sum *per annum*.

Between the "*villeins regardant*" of the house, and the "*lords paramount*"—the dean and chapter,—there now reigns a "*mesne lord*," the student-steward above mentioned. Of the practical working of the new system it is yet too early to judge. There is a *prima facie* reason to hope for its working well. The new student-steward took a "first" in mathematics in 1849; he was for some time after that in the commissariat department of the War Office—going out, if we mistake not, with the Crimean army; and he has recently shown himself, in a certain celebrated parliamentary contest, a good man of business. His new tariff smacks rather more of the tariff of 1864 than we should care about, but we will offer no premature opinion.

This new tariff is called "Regulations of the Steward's Office, Christ Church." A copy of these "Regulations" is before us; and before leaving the subject of the commissariat we will just glance at a few of the points in which this tariff differs from the tariff of 1864.

The "commons of bread, 2d.," is now 1d. The butter at 2d., is now 1d. The beer at 4½d. is now 3d., and so on through the various items of the buttery—the prices being reduced, speaking roughly, about 33½ per cent.

The kitchen items are now as follows:—

	s.	d.
* A common of cold beef	0	9
* " " ham	1	3
* " " brawn	1	0
* " " tongue	1	3
Half a cold fowl	1	3
" " duck	1	6
Meat pie	1	0
Pigeon pie	1	6
Sandwiches	1	0
Soups—gravy, pea, carrot	0	6
" all other	0	9
Mutton broth	0	6
A mutton chop	0	6
Rump steak	1	3
Sausages	1	3
Kidneys, each	0	3
Sole and sauce	1	0
Whiting	0	9
Herrings, each	0	2

* Of these a half-commons may be had.

We confess ourselves unable to see upon what plan the kitchen prices are arranged; and though no doubt there is an improvement in some few of the articles, we are fain to admit that we cannot reconcile the charge of 1s. 3d. for four or five ounces of ham; of 1s. for fourpennyworth of sandwiches; of kidneys, 3d. each; or of herrings, 2d. each, with our notions of *cost price*. We presume it is intended that these articles should be supplied at *cost price*—if not, what is the meaning of this paragraph in the "Regulations"?

"The terminal bill will contain, besides the sum total of the weekly bills of the preceding term, a *separate charge*, hereafter to be determined, to meet the various expenses of the establishment. This charge will be partly a fixed sum, partly a per-centage on the weekly bills."

If this does not mean that the articles are to be supplied at *cost price*, we confess that we do not see what it does mean.

This clause is one of several under the head of "College Bills, &c.," and for the information of Paterfamilias who will be sending his sons to Christ Church at the beginning of "*October Term*," we extract one or two of the more important paragraphs:—

"Weekly bills from the buttery and from the kitchen will be furnished to every undergraduate."

"During the first week in term, the bill for the preceding term will be furnished to every undergraduate, and must be paid at the steward's office before the third Sunday in term. After that date information will be given to the dean of all bills left unpaid."

"Scouts, waiters, and all college servants are paid by the steward, and have no right to ask for any gratuity from undergraduates."

"The only exceptions recognized are as follows:—

"When an undergraduate changes his rooms, the under porter at Canterbury Gate is entitled to a fee of 5s. for moving his property from one set of rooms to another."

"When an undergraduate employs a college messenger to carry luggage to or from his rooms, such messenger is entitled to a suitable remuneration."

"All complaints—in the matter of food, college bills, attendance, &c., must be made to the steward *within a week* of the occurrence of the alleged grievance, and will be immediately investigated."

"The steward receives and pays the valuations of rooms."

"The steward is at his office every day, except Sunday, from 9.30 to 11 a.m."

The real value of the change is to be found in the tail—in the last-quoted paragraph of the "Regulations." The present tariff and arrangements are only tentative. The members of the House—senior and junior—have now the remedy in their own hands. They have a steward—an important part of whose duty is to "receive complaints"; and *if they do not themselves apply the remedy it will be their own fault*. We confess that when we hear of the silly schoolboy tricks even now common amongst the undergraduates of Christ Church, we are not very sanguine as to the "self-reform" which was considered so promising a short time ago. But we will try to hope that these puerile pranks are confined to the few, and that the many are really the men of sense they have lately claimed to be.

The remaining "prospective changes" are concerned with the future social status of some of the members of the House. And here, again, a slight retrospect becomes necessary.

Christ Church, as many of our readers know, is altogether an anomalous foundation. It is neither a college nor a cathedral—or rather, it is both. One of the essential features of a college, a body of "fellows," is wanting at Christ Church. In colleges the fellows administer the revenues of the society, and from among the fellows the tutors are usually selected.

At Christ Church the dean and chapter administer the revenues of the House, and the tutors are selected from an anomalous body called "students," who are more like graduate "scholars" of other colleges than life "fellows."

So peculiar, indeed, is the constitution of Christ Church, that "Her Majesty's Commission appointed to inquire into the state, discipline, studies, and revenues of the University and colleges of Oxford" say, "From Christ Church we have received hardly any evidence;" and it was understood at the time that the information was not given because Christ Church was not one of "the colleges of Oxford;" but whether rightly or wrongly so understood we cannot say. That it was not a "cathedral" was strongly maintained by the then dean so soon after as 1853; but lest we should be deemed inaccurate we give the *ipsissima verba* of Dr. Gaisford himself, merely omitting some few sentences which do not in the least alter the sense of the letter. It runs as follows:—

"Christ Church, April 14th, 1853.

"MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—

"* * * The cathedral church of Christ Church, in Oxford, is totally and fundamentally different from every other cathedral in the kingdom. It is a house of education within the university *just as are the other colleges* [the italics are ours], and subject to the statutes * * of the university. * *

"A complete list of the patronage of *the college* may be seen in the 'Oxford Calendar' for 1853, p. 367.

"* * * When the firstfruits and tenths which had been surrendered by 2 and 3 Philip and Mary, c. 4, were resumed by the Crown, 1 Eliz. c. 4, the tenths originally paid by Christ Church were not resumed, because by sect. 34 of that Act *the colleges of the University* were exempted from its operation. * *

"I have, &c., * *

"T. GAISFORD, Dean."

This reply having "failed to satisfy" her Majesty's Commissioners "that the admitted peculiarity of the constitution of Christ Church was such as to exempt the dean and chapter from the necessity of replying to the Commissioners' queries," the latter, on "May 26th, 1853," proceeded "to fortify and explain" the dean's "statement" by certain "observations." But these "observations" failing also to "satisfy" the Commissioners, a "supplemental commission" was issued on "the sixth day of August, 1853," which, after the usual VICTORIA R. to the vernal "right trusty and well-beloved councillors," &c., &c., went on to say that,—

"~~Whereas~~ doubts have arisen whether the cathedral church of Christ Church, in Oxford, is comprehended by the said [the former] Commission by reason of the same church being also the church of the college of Christ Church, in the University of Oxford, and the dean and canons of the same

church being the governing body of the same college, and having various duties and revenues unconnected with the diocese of Oxford.

"Now our Will and Pleasure is, that you our said Commissioners have power and do proceed to inquire into the state and condition of the said cathedral church, with the view and for the purposes in our said Commission mentioned, in the same manner as you are empowered to inquire into the state and condition of other cathedral churches; but that in making such inquiries you have due regard to the connection of the said cathedral church with the said college. * *

"By her Majesty's command,

"PALMERSTON."

In a document signed "Germain Lavie, M.A., Registrar," and dated "Chapterhouse, Christ Church, 10th November, 1853, the dean and chapter, in obedience to the command of their royal visitor, beg to return * * replies to such questions as the peculiarity of their society, acknowledged by the Commissioners themselves, permits them to answer;" still asserting, however, that "the Church of Saint Frideswide, enclosed within the college gates, and fitted up for the purpose by Cardinal Wolsey, is only in fact a college chapel;" that "twice founded * * simply as an academical college, Christ Church retained its essential characters as a college when it became a cathedral;" its foundation consisting of "a dean, eight canons, one hundred and one students, eight chaplains, eight singing men, eight choristers, and twenty-four almsmen." And to this view of the case the Commissioners assent so far as to admit in their "Report" that "the cathedral of Christ Church, Oxford, having been first established as Cardinal College (A.D. 1525), and secondly as King Henry VIII.'s College (A.D. 1532)," and becoming "finally * * connected with the bishopric of Oxford (A.D. 1546), stands alone in the circumstances of its foundation." However, whether cathedral or college, or neither, or both, the *ædes Christi* was dealt with by the 17 and 18 Vict., c. 81, as a college; and, by ordinances framed under the provisions of that Act, considerable alterations have been made in the constitution of the house. Amongst the chief of these are the reduction of the number of canons from eight to six, and the substitution of twenty-eight "senior students," and fifty-two "junior students" for the one hundred and one "students" under the old system. The "junior students" answer in all respects to the "scholars" in other colleges. They hold their studentships for five years only, and when their tenure is terminated they fall into the ranks of ordinary "independent" members of the House, with no further connection with the foundation whatever, unless, as has happened in one or two cases, they should chance to obtain a "senior studentship," with permanent tenure. But the academic and social status of the "senior students" is by no means so well-defined. And it is this latter body that is now agitating for a change and amelioration of their position.

Out of the twenty-eight senior students to be appointed "under the ordinance of 1858," fourteen have now been appointed; and as half of these have come in from other colleges, where they were accustomed to the idea of "fellows," they expected to find their own position in Christ Church analogous to that of the fellows of their old colleges. They now find that a "fellow" in his college and the "senior student" in the House are very different personages; and they wish to make the student more like the fellow. The senior students complain that they have no share in the general administration of the house beyond the fact that some of their number give the necessary lectures; and they consider that, as they furnish the "teaching power" of the house, they ought to occupy a position superior to that they now hold.

This question is now* being discussed by a board of five arbitrators, one of whom is representing the dean, two the canons, and two the students. The several parties so represented have agreed to be bound by the award of their representatives; and that a private Act of Parliament shall subsequently be obtained to give the report of these private commissioners a practical effect. The dean is represented by Sir Roundell Palmer, the canons by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Sir John Taylor Coleridge, and the students by the Hon. E. T. B. Twisleton and Vice-Chancellor Sir William Page Wood. Three of the arbitrators have been fellows of colleges. Sir Roundell Palmer was a fellow of Magdalen, Sir John Coleridge was a fellow of Exeter, and Mr. Twisleton was a fellow of Balliol. The Archbishop of Canterbury was one of the old "one hundred and one students" of Christ Church, and Sir William Page Wood was a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. It would be impossible to name a better board for the purpose; and the dean and the canons, by nominating two ex-fellows and an ex-student to represent them, have shown a praiseworthy spirit, and there is therefore good reason to hope that this much vexed question will now be permanently and satisfactorily set at rest.

Anomalous as are the new senior students of Christ Church, there exists another body, small and less important, but quite as anomalous. This body is also agitating for change. By Wolsey's foundation, in 1526, "Cardinal College" (as it was then styled) was to include, beside the "one hundred canons," the "one hundred scholars," "professors," &c., &c., "thirteen chaplains." By King Henry VIII.'s foundation, in 1546, in place of these "thirteen chaplains," Wood says that there were substituted "eight minor canons;" and exactly what they now are no one precisely knows. In the reply of the then chapter to the commissioners, dated 10th November, 1853, the chapter quoted *Lord Harwicke* to prove that the chaplains are "chaplains of the house as well as chaplains of the

* *Vide* remarks in private letter (May 15th).

church." And this is so. The chaplains are partly like minor canons, in that they conduct the services of the cathedral; partly like college chaplains, in that they are considered responsible for the college services. They are, however, unlike both minor canons and all other college chaplains, in that "they cannot marry." In the other colleges of Oxford the tendency of late years has generally been to encourage the residence out of college of all members not directly concerned in the education of the college to which they belong; and, as most of the chaplains of other colleges are married men, there are now but few chaplains living in college rooms—not much above half a dozen in the whole university. This restriction as to celibacy is, we have understood, the main alteration which the chaplains seek. The changes sought by the senior students may prove too antagonistic to existing interests to be successful for some time to come; though by consenting to the appointment of the student-steward, and to the subsequent nomination of the board of arbitrators, the present dean and chapter have shown their willingness to do what they can for the concord and general welfare of the college. But the changes sought by the chaplains are a much smaller matter, and *prima facie* seem calculated to produce quite as much benefit to the college and cathedral as to the chaplains themselves. Under the present system it not unfrequently happens that a chaplain will combine some other office or offices with his chaplaincy; indeed, it is said to be a necessity that he should do so to gain a livelihood—and stay on and on till he has become "ineffective" for cathedral duty. Now, if the restriction as to marriage were removed, each married chaplain would place a set of "rooms" at the disposal of the college for the use of an extra undergraduate. The college tie being thus broken by out-residence, the married chaplain—having now a strong inducement to apply for the first chapter living that came down to him—would move off on a benefice, as the minor canons of many cathedrals are beginning to do, and the spectacle of an ancient bachelor chaplain would be even more rare in Oxford than it has already become.

However, whether all, any, or none of these changes come to pass, it would appear that Christ Church has begun to be herself again. After the famous year of 1833 the House seems to have gone steadily downhill; and in the last fifteen years of "the old system" she produced exactly at the rate of one first-class *per annum*; and so small a proportion of these "firsts" were students, that a few years back first-class men as tutors were rather the exception than the rule. But this is changed now. The present tutors are nearly all "firsts;" and besides this, the "senior students under the ordinance," from whom the tutors are appointed, already number in their as yet small body a "Hertford, Gaisford, and Ellerton;" a "Mathematical, Taylorian, and Eldon;" and a "Stanhope,"—designations well understood by those who know Oxford. Christ

Church has once more begun to show favourably in the class lists; and there is still reason to hope that the days of the Peels, the Coleridges, the Percivals, the Bruces, and the Gladstones, may yet be paralleled; and that Christ Church need not despair of again having, as she did in 1833, *five out of thirteen* "firsts"—a Canning, a Jelf, a Vaughan, both "Liddell and Scott," and *one out of two* "double-firsts"—H. G. Liddell, the present dean; and that she may one day again become what she ought in every way to be—the greatest school of the greatest university of the world.

"GOING WITH THE TIDE."

ONWARD down life's rushing stream,
In the evening's golden beam,
Onward to the boundless sea,
The ocean of eternity !
Together we will swiftly glide,
Ever "going with the tide."

Banish'd every thought of sadness
In our hour of quiet gladness ;
Absence, separation o'er,
Together, and to part no more.
United lovingly we glide,
Ever "going with the tide."

Not a sound the silence breaks,
Save the splash each wavelet makes ;
Silently we drift away,
In the sunset's quiet ray,
Onward to the ocean wide,
Ever "going with the tide."

Sail, nor oar, nor helm need we,
Onward to the shoreless sea,
Passing forward like a dream,
Drifting swiftly down the stream,
Seated calmly side by side,
Ever "going with the tide."

Heart to heart responsive beats,
Eye to eye the tale repeats,—
Soul with soul communion hold,
Silently our love is told.
Words we need not as we glide,
Ever "going with the tide."

Storm nor tempest fear we now,
Love sits watching at the prow ;
Happy, trusting, silently,
Onward to the shoreless sea,
Together let us drift and glide,
Ever "going with the tide."

Joy.



A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE.

CHAPTER V.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

THE evening of the same day (the day of the funeral) afforded little or no relief to the suffocating heat; not the faintest air was stirring, not the slightest tremor could be discerned passing through the thickly clustering trees in the grounds about Sedgley Hall. The sky was black and heavy, denoting rain, and the rooks, winging to their nests, cawed with a singular and intuitive fear, that was fully sympathized in by the lowing cattle. There was that painful stillness, that solemn lull in nature, which precedes only a thunderstorm; everything, both living and inanimate, seemed impregnated with deadly expectation. The very flowers looked fain to hide themselves from the sunless sky beneath the shadow of their leaves, which drooped languidly in the stifling atmosphere.

Sir Shenton Bellamy arrived from London upon this evening, weary of his fruitless search and of his life. It will possibly appear strange that he should have relinquished the pursuit of his daughter in the comparatively brief period of two months, but when I explain that during this time he had employed every means likely to lead to success, and all with complete failure, the circumstance of him repairing to his home to recruit his decayed health and exhausted spirits will no longer be a matter of surprise. Forlorn as was the hope of Lilius's recovery, it was still sufficient to animate him to new exertions, and he came to Sedgley but for the purpose of planning with greater ease schemes for a fresh investigation of the secret that surrounded her fate.

The baronet had not given notice of his return to any of the servants at the Hall, so there was no carriage awaiting him at the station to

convey him home, and he proceeded to make the journey on foot. The road was thickly covered with dust, which, thanks to the absence of all wind, was content to lie upon the ground, forbearing to make its usual inroad upon the lungs of luckless pedestrians. The forked lightning from time to time cast its lurid and transient light across the path of the traveller, displaying fully, as he pursued his way in gloomy thought, the ravages that grief had made in his handsome face. The distance was not long, and soon Sir Shenton was treading the sheltered carriage drive, whose leafy canopy on this cloudy evening seemed full of ghostly shadows, all terribly suggestive of the spirits said by the gossips to haunt the good old mansion. Sir Shenton rang the bell with a vehemence that reverberated throughout the building, startling the deer in the adjoining park, who, with their large round eyes, looked furtively at the tall, dark figure, seeming uncertain whether to stay or to scamper for safety to a distance.

The well-taught domestics refrained from expressing by their looks the deep concern they felt at their master's altered appearance, though each, with praiseworthy zeal, was bent upon devising something for the promotion of his comfort. He ordered a trifling refreshment to be prepared for him in the library, to which he immediately repaired. By the time he had sparingly partaken of the delicacies set before him, the clouds parted and gave forth a deluging torrent of rain; the thunder roared at a distance, then more near, mingling alarmingly with the lightning's vivid flash, which brought into momentary relief every piece of antique furniture, and time-worn volume, in the venerable library.

The last eight weeks of unrelieved anxiety had wonderfully enfeebled the once iron-nerved baronet, and now he might be said to quail with childish fear at the loud crashes of the battling thunderbolts, and the red glare of the lightning that came simultaneously with the report. It was long past midnight before the storm abated aught of its violence, and nearly dawn before it entirely subsided; and then, and not till then, did Sir Shenton retire to his chamber, to seek the slumber he was so greatly in need of.

The morning following this stormy night broke with extraordinary loveliness. Creation appeared to be visited with a new spring. The rich green of the meadows was now beautifully visible, and not, as on the previous evening, covered by a pall of brown. The trailing ivy, shaken by the wind, scattered in its gentle undulations a myriad of sparkling rain-drops, and the flowers, glistening with the grateful moisture, expanded to the refreshing breeze, loading it with odours. The birds, too, while pluming their feathers with coquettish grace, paused occasionally to carol forth their gushing notes of joy for the glad sunshine and sweet coolness that converted the lately parched earth into a seeming paradise. Bowed down as was the baronet by an appalling weight of sadness, he yet could not be insensible to the tranquil beauty of the opening day, and after

breakfast passed out into the smiling gardens, wandering listlessly from thence to his favourite walk of sycamores. In many parts of this avenue there were rustic seats, hidden far away from sight beneath the spreading branches of the noble trees, upon one of which he placed himself, and in a few seconds was deeply absorbed in thought.

The darting sunbeams, that played through the boughs on one side and lost themselves on the other, casting on their way a radiance which converted the gloomy walk into a brilliant arcade, were not attractive enough to excite his attention. He was pondering—as when had he for an instant ceased to do since Lilius's flight?—upon the probability of one of the thousand solutions suggested by his overwrought brain for the unravelling of the mystery. So contrary did his daughter's present silence appear to the affection he knew she bore him, that he was compelled sometimes to fancy her dead, only the next moment to begin anew the heart-sickening task of reviewing the circumstances of her disappearance, in the endeavour to glean, if possible, a brighter view of the sad subject.

He could not be said to have given himself up completely to despair; a hope, almost as torturing in its uncertainty as it was life-giving in its blessedness, still kept a place in that careworn brain; a hope that bade him cling to the fond idea of yet seeing his beloved Lilius.

Very painful and engrossing were his reflections on that lovely summer's morn, and far removed was his attention from everything apart from his own sorrows, or he might have heard, not very long after he entered the avenue, the sound of a gentle tread upon the gravel path, and seen a veiled figure approaching stealthily within a few yards of him, where it paused, evidently in distressed contemplation of the great change which had overtaken him.

At length a slight movement on the part of the statue-like form caused the baronet to raise his eyes from the ground, which he had no sooner done than they remained riveted in bewilderment and delight. A spell seemed cast upon him, which with a cry of inexpressible joy he broke—a cry of happiness too intense for words to convey an idea of, which at last found voice in the name of his lost and now recovered child.

Yes, it was she; it was Lilius, whom he held rapturously to his throbbing heart. There she lay upon his breast, just as he had caught her up, too much overcome to answer his wild ejaculations of pleasure other than with sweet and oft-repeated kisses.

“My darling Lily! my dearest child! let me look at you,” he cried, thrusting her gently from him a little way with one hand, as with the other he attempted to uncover her face. She resisted slightly at first, saying it was unfair to scrutinize her after the fatigue of travelling, as she must necessarily look jaded.

Ay, jaded she most certainly was, and something more, to account for the exceeding rigidity and pallor of her features. Her lips were bloodless,

her eyes unnatural in the fixity of their expression and fiery brightness, and her cheeks looked wan and hollow. Excitement and dejection alternately marked her face and attitude; one instant her soul seemed raging with desperation, and at another borne down beneath a crushing burden of despondency. Unflinchingly she sustained her father's grave look, though her whole frame trembled with agitation at his piercing gaze. Most painful indeed to her was that long and earnest survey, and it was with a superhuman effort that she refrained from tearing herself from his grasp and flying out of his sight.

Beneath the friendly shade of the sycamores, Sir Shenton could not see to the full extent the marvellous change which had taken place in her; yet he saw much that was most distressing to him, for tears gathered into his eyes as he again embraced her, which continued as evidences of his sorrow till dispersed by the pleasant July breeze.

At present, by mutual forbearance, neither alluded to the circumstances attending the strange flight and as strange return. Explanations are at best but disagreeable things, and perhaps they were wise to leave them for a time, at least; not that it is to be conjectured they spoke upon any other topic than the one around which their thoughts centred;—no, that was impossible, and in eloquent silence was spent the first hour of their reunion. Joy it was for both of them to meet, but joy not unalloyed. In the father's heart, doubts and suspicions, heretofore absorbed in anxiety for his daughter's safety, revived with treble power when he was assured by Lilius's presence of her security; and in the daughter's breast what emotions conspired to overcome the pleasure she experienced at being again with her parent, might be surmised by the irrepressible gleams of desolating grief that swept occasionally over her lovely face.

By-and-bye the sun became too glaring to be excluded even by the leafy bower over their heads, so hand in hand Sir Shenton and Lilius proceeded towards the Hall.

Miss Bellamy made her way to her apartment by means of a side entrance, as she was desirous for the present of escaping the observation of the domestics. She had proceeded from the railway station direct to the sycamore walk without being recognized by any one, and meeting there (as she had partly expected) with her father, she hoped, supported by his presence, to receive the first greetings of the attached servants.

When she reached her rooms she found that, instead of the faded furniture formerly belonging to her mother, they were fitted up with sumptuous elegance, for the orders the baronet had given before going to London had been carried out with admirable effect. The walls of the boudoir were hung with violet satin, and upon the floor was spread a carpet of velvet to match, while all else corresponded in richness. But no sign of pleasure did Lilius evince, though she could not fail to observe the alteration, and mechanically began busying herself in changing the

travel-stained garment she then wore for one of the multifarious dresses composing her wardrobe, which, at her father's request, had been forwarded from Clardon House.

During her residence at Blackheath she had of course been unaccustomed to the attendance of a maid, and therefore experienced no difficulty in making her toilette. Before leaving the dressing-room she gave an earnest glance at the mirror, to assure herself that the traces of her recent fatigue and anxiety had vanished.

"It will not do," she exclaimed, angrily, addressing her reflected features in the large pier-glass, "for you to look so: away with craven fear, and appear again your light-hearted self; you must, for his sake, seem happy, though your mind give way in the attempt."

Then breaking suddenly into a storm of passionate grief, which threatened to destroy all her previous efforts at calmness, she flung herself upon a seat, sobbing aloud, "My father! my poor, wronged father!"

The weakness that gives vent in a manner so unrestrained cannot be of long duration. Lilius soon recovered her firmness, and gazed once more at the mirror, which gave back a flushed and tearful visage. She stood there looking at herself till the flush settled into her cheeks, and the tears had returned to her full heart, when she gently tripped down-stairs to the dining-room. On her way she met the housekeeper, a comely, dressy woman, who was as remarkable for appreciation of self as for her contempt of every one besides.

Her young mistress stopped her exclamation of surprise with a smile, and a conciliatory hope that she found her well in health, and then passed on, leaving the majestic Mrs. Jordan to whatever opinion of her conduct she was pleased to form; for let us think what we may, our domestics will scan our actions and sit in judgment upon them. Nor can we prevent them doing so, whether we be of the nobility who have a train of menials to do our bidding, or humbler people who are served only by Betty the cook and Sally the housemaid.

Lilius's father was waiting at the dining-room door for her, and fondly conducted her to the head of the table, eyeing her the whole time, and whisperingly complimenting her upon her beauty.

A faint smile, partaking both of sadness and irony, was the sole answer she made; her loveliness appeared to be an object of detestation rather than of pride to her.

The dinner was almost a silent one, for each felt too constrained by the presence of the servant to converse upon other than immaterial subjects, which, in their present frame of mind, were all too trivial to dilate upon.

Shortly they adjourned to the drawing-room, where the restraint imposed by the agitation of their feelings was nearly as embarrassing as the presence of a third person. Sir Shenton was naturally most eager to

question Lillas, but the fear of hearing anything which might quench his rejoicing at her return bridled his impatience; and for his daughter, she had evidently as great a dread of the impending ordeal, and looked the picture of despondency.

At length the momentous stillness was broken by the baronet, who, drawing Lillas to his side, commenced an inquiry into the history of her concealment. Gravely yet tenderly he spoke, waiting with torturing anxiety for her reply.

"Dear papa," she returned, in a tone full of remorse, and hiding her face upon his shoulder, "say, before I give you any particulars, that you will forgive me for having caused you so much anguish, for I can never forgive myself."

"My sweet Lily," he cried, fondly, "forgive you of course I do. Can you think it possible for me to harbour for an instant a thought of anger against you? No, my dear girl, great as have been my sufferings on your account, I will not blame you, only I adjure you, by the love you bear me, to conceal nothing, but put me in possession of the whole of your proceedings since your departure from Blackheath."

Lillas was silent; the words of her father impressed her deeply—too deeply to permit of her replying, and a few smothered sobs were all that for some time broke upon the calm succeeding the baronet's solemn address; but gradually becoming more composed, she essayed to speak, though still without raising her head.

"I left Clardon House," she falteringly began, "because I was unhappy there, and with the intention——" Here she hesitated, and her father, with a joyful smile, concluded the sentence for her.

"With the intention of returning home. Yes, I was sure it was so. And what prevented you, darling?" he asked, gently.

"The fear of grieving you at first, my dear papa; illness afterwards," returned his daughter. "I dreaded to vex you, and yet I could not stay at school."

"But the vexation you were so desirous of sparing me would have been nothing to my distraction at not knowing where you were," Sir Shenton said.

"I know it," Lillas sighed, "but I did not think of this then. I thought if I stayed away a few days, just long enough to make you feel a trifle anxious, you would not be angry with me, nor insist upon my return to the Misses Magendie. 'I have sinned,' she broke forth, with deeper feeling; 'most gravely have I sinned in not trusting to your indulgence, and making known to you my whole heart from the beginning; but pray pardon me,—pardon your repentant Lillas.'"

"I do, I do, my child," was the hurried response. "I have before told you that I acquit you of all wrong, but you must tell me more; I am far from being satisfied. Where were you during your indisposition? and why, if unable to write, did you not engage some one to do it for you?"

If you had but sent me your address I should have been at ease, for I would then have brought you home, and myself become your nurse."

"I was staying at Hornsey, and quite too ill to dictate a letter," answered Miss Bellamy, in a tone scarcely audible.

Sir Shenton heard, yet not with satisfaction; the manner, as much as the words of Lillas, gave him to believe that there was something still untold, an important reserve made in her confession to him. A sudden thought, full of humiliation and horror, occurred to him; a thought which made the blood rush hotly to his pale face, and seethe through his veins like molten fire; and with a harshness never before used in addressing his child, he made the inquiry if she had been alone during the period of her absence.

His gaze was directed sternly upon her as he put the question, and there was that in his expression which was almost terrifying. Lillas fell at his feet, clasping his knees imploringly.

"Papa! papa!" she sobbed, passionately. "What do you mean? you frighten me."

He heeded her not, only answering, in a raised voice, "Tell me, quickly and truthfully, or by Heaven I will no longer consider you my daughter!"

This was a great change, and so totally unlike his general tender bearing towards her, that well might Lillas cower at his feet as she did, trembling and panting with fear. The snowy lids fell over her humid eyes, and a vivid glow suffused her blanched cheek, in a moment to recede again and leave it more deadly white than before.

She made a movement as if to speak, but the power of articulation had forsaken her, and her bowed head sank still lower upon her bosom, in token of the complete dismay this query had wrought within her.

However, the abject misery she betrayed could not soften her father, who was transformed from a kind, easy man, into an inflexible and cruel one.

Again he reiterated his question, and with greater severity than before. Still no answer, save a low cry of suffering, which broke unbidden from the ashy, quivering lips of the prostrate girl.

Sir Shenton became livid with rage.

"Answer me!" he exclaimed, in suppressed accents of grief and fury. "Think you I will meekly submit to the dishonour of my only child?"

"Dishonour!" wildly repeated Lillas, rising and boldly confronting him; "although you are my father, I dare you to link a thought of it with me!" How could you," she continued, with affectionate reproach, "construe my silence into confirmation of my disgrace?"

The style of this address completely took Sir Shenton aback. He had indeed converted her agitation into a proof of guilt, and was as nearly convinced by this burst of indignation that his doubts of her discretion were unfounded, as if she had firmly denied his implied charge. Still he

thought it best to receive a plain answer, so gravely, though in a greatly altered tone, he said,—

"Lilias, you have not yet replied to my question, and I cannot be thoroughly at peace until you have given me your word that you had ~~no~~ ^{some} companion in your retreat."

"Is it so difficult to trust me?" inquired his daughter, evasively.

There was a short pause, filled up by Lilias in toying with the chain of her watch, and by Sir Skenton in a steadfast scrutiny of the separate lineaments of her countenance, which denoted anything but the composure her trifling gave an assumption of.

The baronet was the first to speak, and farther pressed for a reply to his oft-repeated question.

Lilias looked up with an air of surprise. "I thought," she exclaimed, with a dash of petulance in her tones, "that you were contented, and would not continue your interrogation. Of course I was alone; who could have been with me?"

Her parent's face brightened, and, disregarding her manner in the delight he experienced at the substance of her communication, he fondly embraced her, murmuring as he did so, "Bless you, my darling, for this consolation!" then in a few moments added, "But why did you not tell me this before, and not leave me to entertain such awful fears respecting you?"

"I was so alarmed by your angry look, that I knew not what you required of me; but, papa, if you are satisfied, ask me no more questions, for I am very weary."

Her appearance justified her words, and when, with a lingering caress, she bade him adieu, he sought not to detain her, thinking that a good night's rest would do more towards restoring her mind to its proper tone than anything besides.

Directly Miss Bellamy reached her boudoir she locked the door after her, and casting herself upon a sofa, buried her face in its soft cushions.

She made no sound, so it could not be told whether she was engaged in sorrow or only in thought,—perhaps by both, for when she again raised her head, her features were drawn with an expression of exhaustion and pain.

Opposite to her stood a bureau, which, despite its incongruity with the rest of the gorgeous furniture, had been permitted to retain its post, for it had been admired by Lilias's mother, to whom it had especially belonged, and therefore was sacred in the eyes of both father and daughter.

It was by no means an inelegant piece of furniture, and though, by reason of its age, it was not in harmony with anything else in the apartment, it looked not wholly out of place, particularly as it supported a writing desk. Upon this desk it was that Lilias's wandering gaze at length became riveted, and immediately she crossed the room, and

with a key taken from her pocket unlocked it. This had also belonged to her mother, and was filled with papers, whose characters were seared and dimmed by time. Miss Bellamy, however, gave no heed to its contents, but drawing aside a small panel, revealed a nest of secret drawers, in one of which she deposited a tiny bag that had been suspended from her neck by a silken cord, and concealed within her dress. The contents of the bag, whatever they might be, seemed of the utmost value, for with the most scrupulous care she replaced both the drawer and slide, restoring the escritoire to its former innocent appearance. She sighed heavily as she turned aside to her sleeping chamber, where, wearied in mind and body, she quickly fell into a deep, prolonged sleep, which in the young generally succeeds strong excitement or grief.

By the time Miss Bellamy unclosed her eyes it was broad day, so, lightly springing from her couch, she commenced the duties of her toilette. While thus engaged, the door was assailed with a low tap from without, and in answer to Liliás's permission to enter, a young girl made her appearance. She had officiated as lady's-maid to Miss Bellamy upon the occasions of her periodical visits from school—though her proper capacity in the household was that of parlour-maid,—and she had come this morning to offer her services as abigail, till a practised waiting-woman could be procured.

Rather a remarkable personage was this young girl, and though her dress was not above her station, it was arranged upon her neat figure in a manner that distinguished her from other girls in a like position of life, and gave a look almost of refinement to her sedate features, that lacked only expression to be truly pretty. She was naturally quiet; her movements, which were dexterous and easy, deserved even the appellation of stealthy, so noiselessly gentle were they. Her voice was seldom raised above a whisper, and never varied from the slow, even tones which were habitual to her; and her face, calm and passive, rarely denoted the existence of any profound emotion.

"Emma Adams, is that you?" inquired Liliás, without removing her eyes from the tiny boot she was in the act of drawing on.

"Yes, Miss," returned the girl, "I came to ask if you would like breakfast in your room."

"Certainly not, my good Emma; do you not see how gloriously the sun shines? I long for a walk in the garden. Come, assist me to dress."

The girl obeyed, and less than half an hour saw Liliás arrayed in the most spotless of muslin robes, her magnificent dark hair arranged in floating ringlets that clustered in graceful profusion around her witching face.

"Oh, how beautiful!" cried Emma Adams.

Liliás gave a short mocking laugh, and moved to go.

"Oh, Miss," her attendant pursued, entreatingly, "you have not looked at yourself."

"Why should I?" asked Liliás, complying, nevertheless, with her request to turn back and give "just one glance."

Her sight rested on such a picture of radiant beauty, that she may well be excused if she afforded more than "one look" at the enchanting reflection. No trace was left of yesterday's trying emotions; all was fresh and beaming on that countenance. Suddenly some terrible image seemed to present itself before her; an ashen hue superseded the pale damask of her cheeks, her brilliant eyes were obscured by a film, her coral lips became of a bluish tint, and her whole frame convulsed with acute mental or bodily anguish. She tottered from the dressing-table towards a chair, but her strength was not sufficient to support her so far, and she fell prostrate into the arms of Emma, who had come forwards to her assistance.

At first the girl thought she had fainted, but her mistress quickly reassured her upon that point, explaining, as soon as she was able to speak, that she had lately had two or three similar attacks of nervousness, and that there was no need for alarm; to which Emma answered as if she thought this account the most natural in the world, while in her heart she was convinced that the cause must have been no common one to excite such an amount of agitation.

When Miss Bellamy had nearly recovered she said,—

"Come nearer to me, Emma; I have not seen you for so long a time."

Emma did as she was requested, and placed herself before Liliás in such a position that the bright summer's rays rested full upon her.

Miss Bellamy examined her physiognomy earnestly—so earnestly that the girl flushed painfully under her steadfast gaze; but this Liliás did not observe, or, if she did, was indifferent to it, continuing thoughtfully to scan the broad forehead, pale blue-gray eyes, small, compressed mouth, and massive chin, as if intent upon reading by their aid every quality of the girl's mind and heart.

It is to be concluded that the result of this long calculation was satisfactory, for subsequently, upon a little farther reflection, Liliás remarked,—

"As I am come now to remain at the Hall, I shall, of course, require a maid. I thought of asking the housekeeper to seek one for me, but I think you will suit me very well; and though unaccustomed to the duties of a *femme de chambre*, you can shortly learn them, and I am not particularly exacting. Say, should Sir Shenton acquiesce in this arrangement, will it be agreeable to you?"

As she listened to this proposal, Emma betrayed unwonted animation, and the quick but short-lived brightening of the eyes showed a lurking fire within, which the calmness of her exterior did not harmonize with. She replied quietly,—

"Thank you, Miss,—thank you; I shall like it much," and com-

menced collecting and arranging the scattered trinkets and articles of clothing that covered the room.

"Well, then," was her mistress's rejoinder, "if papa does not object, you must for the future consider yourself exclusively my servant."

Sir Shenton Bellamy did not, as his daughter expected, offer any opposition to this arrangement, but rather gave his consent with readiness. If he was a trifle surprised that his daughter's choice, commonly so fastidious, should have settled upon a girl possessing such little skill in the duties of tire-woman, he confined the wonder to his own breast, together with a secret congratulation that she had not selected a French maid, than which nothing, except a mongrel dog and an ill-bred horse, was a greater abomination to him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RING.

SUBSEQUENTLY to Liliás's denial of having had a companion during her long absence from home, her father resolved to discard from his mind any idea detrimental to his love for her, and to be content with considering her explanation as lucid a one as could readily be given of a *woman's* actions or motives. But for all this determination he was not perfectly at ease; a something, barely perceptible to his sight, was different in his daughter. It was not that she was less affectionate; on the contrary, she demonstrated her love for him in every imaginable way; though at the same time she shunned his society. She, who had always been the most thoughtlessly happy of mortals, now indulged in long fits of abstraction, from which she would arouse herself with a forced gaiety truly pitiful to behold. Never, surely, had there been a girl less addicted to solitude; but latterly she was changed also in this particular, for she would daily repair to the sycamore walk, or some still more secluded spot amidst the tall, thick trees in the park, and remain there for hours together, quite unemployed save by her thoughts.

Frequently would Sir Shenton commence a conversation, with the intent of eliciting the cause of this unaccountable alteration in her habits, and as often as he did so, in her old, pretty, coaxing way, she would stay his words by her kisses. What, then, could he do, other than send back his half-formed doubts deep into his heart (there to remain till some new incident should rouse them to renewed activity), and return her caresses with interest?

But there was yet another change, greater than all this, in Miss Bellamy, and one that smote cruelly upon her fond father. Never in her life had she lost so much as an hour's pleasure or rest from ill-health, and now, from some undefinable reason, she was constantly either feverish or debilitated.

Her step lost its elasticity, her cheek its bloom, and her eye its fire; yet she never complained,—rather resenting any allusion to her evident indisposition. To those she did not care for, who asked respecting her health, or sympathized with her for its decay, she would say shortly that she was perfectly well, and needed nothing but to be left at rest; and to her father, if she was less curt, she was not more communicative.

Many circumstances served to support the baronet's belief in his daughter's unhappiness, and two in particular. He had on one occasion left her for a short time alone, and unexpectedly returning, surprised her with the traces of tears upon her face, which but a few moments back had been wreathed with smiles.

While he forced himself to appear indifferent to the strange and sudden alteration in her, he could not help dwelling with distress upon the incident, for it sufficed to prove that she was possessed of cares which she dreaded to confide to him.

Another time, upon entering the picture gallery, he observed her the image of despair, with eyes streaming, and hands raised in supplication before the portrait of her mother. There was such a world of intense pain in the fair upturned face, that her father paused awe-stricken, his gaze concentrated upon her, and his heart wildly beating with dread.

"Shade of my mother," she murmured, in a voice of suffering appeal, "look down with pity upon your wretched child; disdain not to acknowledge me, low as I must have sunk in the sight of one so pure as thou, but let me have the consolation of communing with thy blessed spirit, for here there is none I dare make a partner of my woes."

A sigh concluded this invocation, and she continued, her whole soul in her face, to look at the angelic picture, as if really interchanging ideas with it.

Wonderful it was that her father managed to smother his anguish so as to remain undiscovered; yet he did so, and staggering from the spot as one intoxicated, fled to his study to brood in bitterness of heart over the lost peace of his only treasure.

What words were these to issue from the lips of the idolized daughter, the favourite alike of man and nature! So much did her father love her, that there was nothing he would have hesitated doing to serve her; and in return for this unexampled devotion she refused to give him her confidence, complaining even that she was friendless and alone. What did she mean? What guilt could burden her young existence? what hidden fears scare joy from a breast naturally so joyous? These were terrible questions—questions that time alone (that great solver of mysteries and fulfiller of destinies) could answer. Meanwhile, the discovery he had made he resolved to confine to himself, and not permit, if he could avoid it, anything to betray his anxiety to Lillias.

Day followed day, and nothing transpiring to deepen the impression upon Sir Shenton's mind, which the sight of his daughter's agonized look

and words had left upon him, he began to imagine the cause of her singular melancholy could not be so great as he had at first conceived. He, however, determined, by some indirect manner, to gain if possible fuller intelligence; and accordingly, when alluding to her seclusion previously to her return to Sussex, he went on to mention the circumstance of Miss Hartop giving him the ring which she had found in the garden at Clardon House after Lilius's departure; vaguely hoping, by this means to elicit something of the poorly-explained reason of her secret flight. While he was speaking, he took the ring from the cabinet, where he had placed it immediately upon his arrival at the Hall after his wearisome search, and gave it into Lilius's outstretched hand. She shuddered a little as she looked at the glancing green eyes of the serpent, which, she said, seemed as if they were possessed of vision, and turned it over and over again in her taper fingers, with a far-away look in her eyes, and a nervous twitching of her beautiful mouth.

Without appearing to do so, Sir Shenton watched her narrowly, for a species of instinct whispered him that the ring had somewhat to do with the secret which he burned to become master of.

"Why," said he, "do you prize this ring above all your other trinkets, as your friend gave me to understand you did?"

Lilius started violently as he put the question, and with heightened colour observed,—

"Ada has quite misinformed you if she told you I set particular value upon it; I purchased it from a Jew chiefly on account of its singularity, besides which the man assured me it was very old; indeed, that it had been an heirloom in an ancient family for more than two hundred years."

"Really! The diamond is a good one, as are also the emeralds; and the gold, massive as the ring is, must be of considerable worth. What did you give for it? and where did you buy it?"

Sir Shenton said this in a cold, even tone, still with his glance intently fixed upon Lilius's face, which had varied in expression oftener than there were words in his speech; from listlessness and impatience she had collapsed into complete consternation. She clutched the bauble tightly in her fragile grasp, as if she had the will to crush it to atoms; then she gave a shy look at her father, and seeing how his lowering brows were turned upon her, she could not resist the impulse to scream. The cry, sharp and loud, recalled the father and banished the judge from the baronet's breast. He rose hastily, and stepping to his daughter's side—who, pale and faint, lay back in her chair,—tenderly stroked her glossy tresses, and bade her recall herself; which she soon did, resolutely rising and walking backwards and forwards the length of the room, though her step was feeble and her brain giddy.

When she again resumed her seat she was the first to interrupt the impressive silence.

"You were inquiring of me," said she, tremulously, "where I bought the ring, when I was seized with that stupid faintness. The air is laden with electricity, and extreme warmth, you know, always makes me ill."

"I know of no such thing," thought her father, but he did not so express himself, waiting quietly for her to continue.

"When or where I bought it I really cannot say, or even what the price of it was,—I quite forget all about it; of course it must have been near Blackheath, for I was not permitted to stray far from thence."

"Are you perfectly sure that you did buy it at all?" Sir Shenton inquired, in the same harsh manner.

His daughter's eyes lit angrily, and her voice trembled with indignation as she said,—

"Why is it, papa, that you doubt my word now, when you used to consider it inviolable? I cannot bear your insinuations; if you have anything against me, tell me,—oh! tell me, and then suffer me to be at peace."

Her father heaved a deep sigh, and answered gravely,—

"Lilias, you are right; I used never to mistrust you, but now when I ask you a question, however simple, you answer with evasions. What then can I conclude from this but that you have a mystery interwoven in your brief history which you fear being brought to light? I have ever been indulgent towards you, and you will find me none the less so at present if you will fully confide in me."

He stopped for a reply, but none came. Lilias seemed undergoing a great struggle; she had turned her face from view, and stood motionless as a statue. Her father, perceiving her unable to speak, continued,—

"If I distress you by my want of faith, believe me, what you suffer is not greater than what I do; fain would my heart acquit you of any concealment from me, but my judgment will not allow it. When you denied that you left Blackheath with any companion, I fully credited your assertion, though latterly, from a close examination of your conduct, I am led to think you have deceived me; if you will confess it, I will forgive you freely and unconditionally; but if, as I trust, you told me the truth, I demand that you will confirm it by an oath, and I promise you that I shall be satisfied. Do you hear me, Lilias?" he added, as he saw she still remained with her head turned away, and apparently incapable of motion.

"I do," she answered, in a sepulchral voice, after the lapse of a few seconds, "and I am ready to take the oath in whatever form you please."

Her father gave an exclamation of delight. "Then what you told me is true," he cried, and crossing the room he took from a bookcase a small Bible.

"Here, Lilias," presenting it to her, "kiss that,—it was your poor

mother's, and should make your vow still more solemn,—and swear you were alone from the time you left school till the hour you came home."

The natural hue of Miss Bellamy's face had changed to a deadly pallor, but her hand shook not as she clasped the sacred volume, nor her voice as she repeated after her father the required vow.

With breathless eagerness he watched each word as it fell from her lips, and when she had finished speaking he left the room.

With a sigh of intense relief his daughter saw him depart, and ejaculated despairingly, as she sank exhausted upon a seat, "What new trial is in store for me? Is this one deed to blacken my whole life?"

CHAPTER VII.

DOCTOR DARBY.

AGAIN all suspicion was lulled in Sir Shenton's breast, and his confidence in his daughter fully restored. With no misgiving did he now mark her increased love of seclusion, deeming it but the romantic dawning of approaching womanhood. It is true that her health improved imperceptibly, if at all; yet she strenuously opposed having any medical consultation upon her condition, averring that it was only the extreme warmth of the weather that enfeebled her steps and robbed her complexion of its healthy tint.

At length her father became so much dissatisfied regarding her, that she was constrained to submit to his wish, and consent to see the physician he had summoned.

Dr. Darby had long been an acquaintance of Sir Shenton, who possessed as strong a friendship for the kind-hearted man of physic as he did for any of his more highly descended neighbours; and as the doctor will figure somewhat conspicuously in this history, it will not be amiss to bestow upon him a few words of introduction.

He was of middle height, slightly inclined to corpulency—as was befitting at his age, for he was over fifty,—and of a bearing the most upright and dignified. Many years back he had been a surgeon in the army, and thus had acquired the commanding air which usually distinguishes the military man from the civilian. His brow was broad and intellectual, his eyes sparkled with mirth, and he had a smile ready to shine upon everybody and everything. He was a great smoker, a lover of cheerful company, a glass of wine, and an argument. Like most people, he clung tenaciously to his own opinion, but yet—which is too uncommon—he could listen with patience to another's reasons; ay, and even adopt them, if upon examination he found them sounder than his own. Then he was famed for his skill in his profession, and likewise for his willingness to attend upon those from whom a fee was an impossibility, so that no one

had a better name in and about Sedgley than the worthy doctor. His patients were to him as friends, whether they were young or old.

In compliance with Sir Shenton's desire, Dr. Darby paid a professional visit to Miss Bellamy, whom he declared to be suffering entirely from anxiety and want of sleep. He felt her pulse, which beat fiercely, and her hand, that was dry and burning, and peremptorily ordered her to bed for the day, where, from the effects of the composing draught he administered, he trusted she would lose all disturbing reflections in sleep.

In answer to her father's solicitous inquiries about her, he told him in an earnest manner, that amazed as much as terrified him, that if his instructions were not strictly attended to, and every cause of agitation removed from Miss Bellamy's mind, it was extremely probable that brain fever would ensue from the constant mental irritation under which she was labouring.

His auditor murmured reflectively in reply that she had no cause for unusual excitement, and that the doctor must be mistaken as to the source of the feverish symptoms she exhibited.

"Begging your pardon, Sir Shenton, not in the least," emphatically returned Dr. Darby. "That Miss Bellamy has a secret which is the occasion of severe distress to her is *certain*; what that secret is I must leave you to discover." Thus concluding, he bade his adieu, and sprang down the stairs with a professional step, quick yet stately.

Lilias's father stood for an instant after the well-intentioned physician had left him, petrified with astonishment. Though incapable of conjecturing anything likely to account for his daughter's singular depression, he could not still the echo of the doctor's warning, nor the harrowing conviction he himself possessed that she was a prey to a hidden grief. The only means of arriving at the truth was to scrutinize her closely; but this he had tried, and with what little success!

"Dr. Darby is a sensible man, and a good one," he said aloud, after a long cogitation upon the painful subject; "I will consult him." And with the consoling idea of relieving his mind from its oppressive weight by means of his friend's advice, he dismissed for the time any lingering uneasiness, and was quickly lost in the enchanting pages of "Don Quixote."

The sedative Lilias had taken acted soothingly upon her perturbed mind, and for the second time only, since her return home, she enjoyed the luxury of a dreamless and lasting sleep. Owing to this she was next morning considerably better, and her spirits assumed a more natural tone; she was neither too gay nor too serious, but calmly cheerful. So favourable an alteration inspired her father with renewed hope; but how cruelly was it dashed when, a little later, overpowered by what had been chiefly an effort at serenity, Lilias broke out in a strong fit of hysterics, without any apparent cause! Disappointed in the trust he had clung to

with such tenacity for the few hours, that Lilius's mysterious indisposition had taken a turn for the better, the perplexed baronet, agreeably to the resolve formed the evening before, sallied forth on a visit to Dr. Darby.

His road lay along the dusty highway, to which not even a shrub afforded a shade from the glaring sun, after he had passed the boundary of his own estate.

The worthy physician was absent when Sir Shenton reached his abode, attending to the wants, real or imaginary, of his aristocratic patients.

He was invited by the servant who answered his ring to take a seat in the surgery, and await the doctor's arrival; and as he had no desire to continue longer beneath the sun's mid-day rays, he readily acquiesced.

Dr. Darby's surgery was rather a different place from those generally answering to the name; it displayed none of the ordinary paraphernalia characteristic of the healing art. Its sole mark of recognition to those diminutive inquisitions was an imposing collection of medical books, which, in the brightest of bindings and neatest of order, faced you upon your entrance.

The good doctor had been married, but, his wife having died young and leaving him childless, his bachelor habits had returned to him, and in the surgery it was that he spent most of the time which was not occupied remote from the tall red-brick house upon which, in unmistakable letters, was inscribed "Darby Villa." In a corner of this cosy little room, removed from the eye of vulgar curiosity, was stowed away his gun—for he was a great sportsman,—while in the same inglorious obscurity were his meerschaum and slippers.

Soon the footsteps of the physician were heard upon the gravel path, and then in the hall. He expressed himself delighted at the baronet's visit, in honour of which he drew forth his meerschaum, having first presented Sir Shenton with a cigar, which he assured him excelled in quality any that gentleman could procure, unless he got them from the particular London house—Hudson's—whence that had been bought. Fortunately it happened for his urgent hospitality that his visitor had been loudly complaining against the inferiority of his last box of cheroots, and therefore thankfully accepted the one proffered, to whose superiority his testimony was readily added.

Thus far gratified in his kind intentions, Dr. Darby's next motion was for a glass of punch, which he declared he possessed the valuable art of compounding as but very few in this rapidly degenerating age were capable of doing; nor, considering how much knowledge of this kind is acquired by being in the army, was his skill in this particular to be wondered at. As much as courtesy would permit did Sir Shenton resist participating in this anti-summer beverage, but he was ultimately forced to give way. The famous drink being properly mixed, and Dr. Darby again seated in his capacious arm-chair, with his beloved pipe fondly pressed between his lips, the baronet introduced the subject of his

daughter's indisposition, describing fully the symptoms of decline she evinced, and imploring him to do his utmost to save her from the fate of her mother.

The doctor's reply was that no physical cause accounted for Miss Bellamy's alarming state, and he must consequently impute her lassitude and excitability to purely mental causes. He said that he could do nothing for her, and told his friend that if he would keep his child he must win her confidence, and by sharing her anxiety, whatever its object, save her from a burden which threatened to prove too heavy for her strength.

"But I have questioned her repeatedly, and she persists in assuring me that she is entirely at ease. What, then, can I do?" inquired Lilius' afflicted father, with great agitation.

"Watch her," rejoined the man of physic, emphatically. "Watch her carefully and continually; though by all means let it not appear that she is an object of undue attention. If you can learn nothing satisfactory in this way, you must then employ some confidential person to follow her footsteps and mark her actions."

"Would you," indignantly interrupted Sir Shenton, "desire me to place a spy over her?"

"If it is your wish that she should live, I answer Yes," composedly returned the other. "It is the only course open to you; she will not admit what it is that night after night keeps her wakeful, and in the day morbidly sad or feverishly elated, so you must, by placing a vigilant but disguised guard upon her, find out for yourself the mystery."

Sir Shenton sighed heavily, and then musingly observed, "She is certain of not returning to the strict surveillance of her governess, whom I know she dislikes, so this cannot be the reason of her moodiness; and I am wholly at a loss for proofs to justify your supposition of her being the holder of a secret."

"It is no supposition, but a fact," somewhat hotly put in Dr. Darby, "and you need not be at a loss to discover the origin of her depression. Girls of her age have mostly but one malady. I would not be so plain with you, only as you cannot arrive at a solution of this singular ailment yourself, it is, I think, imperative in me to suggest the most probable. Is she in love?"

"In love!" reiterated Lilius' parent, with an expression that partook of the ludicrous as well as the sorrowful. "Impossible! I should without fail have noticed the least change in her countenance when addressing any of our acquaintance."

"Don't be so sure, my dear Sir Shenton; you are perhaps not quite so discerning as you think for. Pray enumerate to me the names of your gentlemen guests or casual friends, and I will give you my opinion concerning their different qualifications for winning ladies' hearts."

Mournfully the baronet complied, and ran over a list of fox-hunting,

horse-racing men, that made his auditor burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

"In sooth," said the doctor, when he found breath for speech, "you are right, and have nothing to fear from the already-mentioned swains. But are they all?"

"No," dismally replied his friend; "there is Sir Christopher Groves, of Grove Court."

"A man turned sixty, and a miser to boot. No, no; that will not do."

"Well, then there is young Augustus Mansfield."

"As old a *roué* and practised a gambler as if he had seen eighty, instead of not yet thirty years. I must decide against him; though, to be sure, your daughter can have had no opportunity of hearing of his bad qualities, and he is said to be insinuating with women."

"Oh, he cannot be the chosen one, I am convinced," cried the baronet, in accents of terror.

"I am glad to hear you say so; but why have you exempted from your catalogue Owen Arnold, the son of your valued friend? One can say nothing against his morals, and his person is such as to insure him a good reception with any girl."

"Pray Heaven, doctor, that it may be Owen; for, to let you into a secret, Mr. Arnold and I have for years planned a marriage between them. Nothing would delight me more, at the proper time; but I do not regard that as come yet,—she is so very young."

The doctor filled and relighted his meerschaum, with a deeply reflective air, and pondered a few moments before he remarked,—

"Again I must remind you that you have made a very important omission. You are, I know, intimate with Lieutenant Cole; what say you to him? Though somewhat of a fop, he is considered fine-looking, and perhaps would be, but for his insufferable vanity. If you have had him even once as your guest, since Miss Bellamy has been at home, he would run away with the notion that she was the slave of an undying passion, called into existence by his irreproachable whiskers and moustaches. I warn you to beware of him, as, however manifold the shortcomings of a man may be, if a woman is pleased by his appearance at first sight, it takes a very long time to dispel the illusion, and behold him in his true colours."

Thus Dr. Darby chatted away, till he perceived—which he was slow to do—that his visitor was engaged in sorrowful reflection.

"Bless me!" he mused, "if I do not effect a cure in Miss Bellamy, or at least promise to do it, I shall see my poor friend become melancholy."

"I think," he exclaimed, addressing Sir Shenton, "that you had better invite me to dinner to-morrow, as I can then observe your daughter more fully than by paying a professional call. Shall I be obtruding?"

"Certainly not, my dear doctor; I shall be truly delighted for you to form one of our little circle. Come by all means, and as often as you please. By-the-bye, Owen Arnold will be there to-morrow, which will afford you ample opportunity of judging whether or not Liliás's heart is affected towards him."

The baronet grasped his friend's hand cordially as he gave this invitation, and appeared so truly pleased at the idea of entertaining the convivial physician, that his host was vastly gratified, promising strict punctuality to the dinner-hour.

And he kept his word: the ensuing day, about five o'clock, might his portly figure have been seen ensconced in one of the most commodious chairs the mansion contained. He was sitting in the embrasure of one of the windows, with Miss Bellamy by his side, who looked more than commonly charming upon this occasion. A bright crimson spot nestled on her soft cheek, and her eyes were brilliantly lustrous; never had her wondrous beauty shone more resplendently, the rich violet of her dress enhancing the snowy purity of her complexion, and the pearls she wore in her hair giving a pleasing relief to its steel-like brightness. Dr. Darby, with the privilege his age afforded him, told her how attractive she looked, expecting her to be gratified by the compliment; she, however, showed nothing of satisfied vanity, but a well-nigh frightened aspect, as she listened to his light chat. Two or three times she was on the point of excusing herself for leaving him, but she could not do this without appearing singular, so was compelled to retain her seat and keep up the conversation. It turned upon their neighbours, whom the doctor, for some design of his own, persistently desired her opinion of. One by one he reviewed them, forcing out of her the estimation in which she held them. Vainly she assured him that she knew nothing of their characters, and was therefore unqualified to answer his numerous questions; he declared the slight sketches she drew were so correct, and that he experienced so much pleasure in listening to her, that she was constrained to humour his whim. Suddenly she observed to him that they were all gentlemen he had obliged her to quiz.

"Have I really been so remiss," he exclaimed, with a mock air of contrition, "as to leave out the ladies? Pray pardon me, and condescend to give me one more of your agreeable word-portraits before we leave the male portion of society. What think you of our young friend Arnold?"

"That he is both amiable and agreeable," Liliás replied, unaffectedly; "I know of no one I like better."

"Do you like any one as well, even including your father?" slyly whispered the doctor in her ear.

Miss Bellamy blushed violently, then recovering herself, calmly, almost haughtily, returned, "You utterly mistake me if you imagine that he, or any one, could be so dear to me as papa." With this she turned, for as she was still answering the doctor, the subject of their conversation

was by her side. She feared at first he had heard her remark, and looked for a confirmation of it in his face; it bore, however, no sign of any disagreeable emotion. It was a very handsome countenance, lighted up by dark blue eyes, whose beauty was heightened by their tender, almost sad expression; his physiognomy, while exhibiting candour and generosity in a large degree, was expressive also of indomitable firmness and perseverance. He was just what the doctor had said, a very captivating young fellow, and well calculated to be a favourite with the fair sex; yet, notwithstanding his attractions, Liliass's reception of him was far from flattering, for without being positively repelling, it was cold enough to prevent any near approach to familiarity.

When young Arnold and his lovely hostess had exchanged greetings, dinner was announced; Owen proffered his arm to Liliass to conduct her to the dining-room, and as this was but a mark of the barest civility, she could not well refuse, although she cast a wistful glance at the doctor, as if desirous that he should release her from the necessity of a *tête-à-tête* (if only of a moment) with the "agreeable" Owen.

"Ah," thought Doctor Darby, chuckling to himself over his powers of diplomacy, as just exhibited in arriving at what he considered the state of Liliass's affections, "it is very well for her to place her father before him; that is the way women always try to deceive. Mere prudery;—why, I dare wager anything, she is as happy to be leaning on his arm as his look bespoke him to be in having her rest there, despite the pretty air of terror with which she regarded him. I know all about girls' hearts; they can't blind me;" and with this stupendous conceit, the enlightened doctor seated himself at the sumptuously spread board.

When the gentlemen rejoined Liliass in the drawing-room the worthy physician pressed her to favour them with a song, which request, being earnestly seconded by Owen Arnold, she readily complied with. Her preliminary notes served to prove her a perfect mistress of the divine art of music. Her auditors listened to the succeeding brilliant performance with extreme pleasure, but when she again touched the instrument at their united and warm desire, they were more than pleased, they were enthralled. This second melody was more touchingly melancholy than her first had been enlivening. Besides possessing a voice of great compass and sweetness, she was blessed with that power of expression without which music becomes discord, and with it a something removed from earth. Had her tones been far less clear and powerful, her singing must have been truly enchanting, such a depth of feeling pervaded it throughout; and in pathetic pieces particularly did her exquisite modulation become apparent. If, gifted as she was with a keen perception of the ludicrous and lively, she imparted the gaiety of her mood to others through the correctness of her execution, how much more did she thrill and intoxicate with her delicious rendering of a history, passionate or sorrowful!

The tender-hearted doctor was even beguiled of a few tears, which (a

tribute to her genius) coursed down his sunburnt cheek unchecked, and both her father and young Arnold were deeply moved.

As she rose from the music-stool no applause broke from her entranced hearers; their silence—which showed their repugnance to break the spell that bound them, until the faintest echo had died away—and the wrapt expression of admiration depicted on their faces, was higher praise than the loudest bravuras or the most exalted of wordy compliments.

Herself strongly affected by sympathy with the griefs she had been relating, and which she made her own, Miss Bellamy resumed her seat without speaking, Owen taking care to secure a place beside her.

That he was madly in love was discernible both to Sir Shenton and his medical friend, but more so to Lilius herself. She would have had less than womanly penetration could she have been blind to the fact that his eyes followed her every movement, with the earnestness of a devoted slave those of his master. But there is no occasion for simile; what adoration or indefatigable watchfulness can compare with that a young lover exhibits towards his mistress? From Lilius's earliest childhood they had lived upon terms of more than intimacy, and until her departure for Blackheath the intercourse of the boy and girl had flowed with uninterrupted serenity.

Lilius had confided to Owen all her little cares and secrets, sought his advice, and followed it with wonderful docility, even when most opposed to her own inclination; he on his part being content at playing the master by turns, for in some respects her will was absolute. It would be difficult to say which he found most sweet, rule or obedience; for if she had a captivating way of yielding, she had an equally irresistible power of dominion. Never was it mentioned before Lilius that her father had designed Owen for her future husband, and she was too much of a child to entertain dreams of the future, so would call him sometimes her cousin, at others her brother; but Owen loved her more than brothers love,—with a pure and lofty ardour that stirred in his young soul the spirit of a hero. I really believe if by a word he could have created some great danger for her, the temptation to prove what he would dare in her behalf would have been too much for him to withstand. Oh! if a lion could have crossed their path in the quiet grounds of the Hall, with mien fierce as in his native jungle, what a glorious achievement it would have been to strangle it before her face! And supposing such a very unlikely circumstance, she would have stayed to see the combat out, if not have joined against the king of beasts; for if ever masculine courage dwelt in female breast, it was in Lilius's.

Owen formed different dreams from these now; he did not want any grander opportunity for an exhibition of his love than that of having his charmer near him always, to cheer in distress and sympathize with in every changing mood.

The three years passed at school had seriously modified Liliás's affection for her old playmate and counsellor, and as by a series of mischances she had not once seen him during that time, she met him again with the feeling that he was quite a different person. Outwardly, indeed, he had changed, though not so much as she; and his nature being more constant, his character more settled, it needed but a view of the unfolded graces of her mind and person to rouse the dreamy idolatry of the youth into a man's strong passion. Her varying behaviour, now severe, now simply indifferent, and again confidentially tender, served to fan the blaze as an even current of kindness could not. She desired to make him understand that marriage was out of the question, yet longed to establish between them the same fraternal unreserve as formerly; and between these two wishes she was driven into the extremes of distance and familiarity.

As Sir Shenton and Dr. Darby were plunged irrecoverably in argument, Liliás was compelled to listen and talk to Owen the greater part of the evening; and curious it was to see how, regarding him in his past character of friend and confidant, and his present as a lover, she alternately showered upon him words of affectionate sympathy and remembrance, or of cold rebuke.

It was a late hour when the two guests departed, yet Sir Shenton would not let Liliás retire without a few moments' chat with her.

"You have not seemed to belong to me so much as to young Arnold and Dr. Darby," he said, "and I must really detain you with me a short time, to convince myself that I have not again lost you."

This was spoken lightly, but after a little while he added in a serious tone, "I suppose, Lily, I must relinquish my claim as your protector some day, for that of a husband."

Liliás trembled so violently, that she shook the chair upon which she rested; her emotion was altogether unobserved by her parent, and he resumed,—

"As I know, in the natural course of events, this must sooner or later be the case, I am anxious to see you united to one who is sure of making you happy, and who, in addition to this, will not separate you from your poor old father; for these reasons I heartily countenance the preference that Owen Arnold evinces for you, and desire, Lily, that if you care for him you will not torment him by a delayed acceptance of his suit; not that I would like you to be married early, only, my darling, if you love him well enough eventually to become his wife, it would please me that you acknowledge it, and, by an open announcement of your engagement, for ever check the hopes of other admirers."

He ceased, and turning to Liliás for an answer; he saw it in the frightful paleness of her face (so different from the blushing, ill-concealed joy he half expected to behold there), and in the terrified glance of her midnight orbs.

"My child, what ails you? If you do not love him, nothing could

induce me to encourage his addresses. Why should you fear me, Liliās? I am no tyrant, that you should look so white and terrified at my proposal. Ah! do you," he ejaculated, with sudden energy—"do you regard for any one else? Is this the cause of your distress?"

"No; no, papa, I love no one so well as yourself, and never shall, so do not send me away. Oh! let me stay with you."

The tone in which she uttered these words was more than prayerful, it was agonizingly beseeching. Her father replied to her supplication only by a caress; his mind was troubled, and he could not answer by speech. She seemed to understand his mute kiss for a consent to her petition, and releasing herself from his arms, glided from the room. She returned, however, when she had passed the threshold, to bestow another lingering salute upon him, and then a second time departed. Sir Shenton was about to recall her, when he checked himself. "I cannot understand this," he mentally exclaimed; "why should she display such alarm at the idea of being wedded to the handsomest and most gentlemanly man for miles round, who is besides a near neighbour, and possesses the triple advantages of being young, amiable, and rich, and who also (which with a girl weighs much more than all conjoined) is idolatrously fond of her? Well, well," he concluded, with a sigh, "woman must ever remain a riddle, with which men distract themselves in the vain hope of expounding."

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH."

WE must follow the subject of the baronet's rather puzzling reflections to her own apartments, which, in the sumptuous elegance of their adornments, looked fitting the loftiest and loveliest. Having reached her dressing-room, she summoned her attendant, who in the boudoir was engaged in altering one of her mistress's costly dresses. Late as was the hour, this exemplary maid considered her time so exclusively belonging to her lady, that she usually employed herself till the moment of retiring in some work of Liliās's. She answered Miss Bellamy's call by immediately appearing, the flounce of the dress still in her hand.

Emma Adams had contracted for her kind mistress as strong an affection as can exist in one of her indifferent composition; for Liliās she would put on a smile, and to lure her from the fits of abstraction, of late so common to her, would gaily detail all the gossip of the village, or anything else she thought likely to give a momentary interest, and would as submissively cease when she saw that her volubility was wearisome, as she would commence again at the slightest hint from Miss Bellamy that she wished to be withdrawn from her thoughts.

Though not possessing an education superior to her class, Emma

Adams was quite capable of amusing her young lady by reading, which she did in so pleasing and natural a manner that, without straining the attention of her hearer, thoroughly kept it alive; she could, too, join in any conversation which Liliás opened, with an easy assurance that was agreeable rather than offensive, since she never persisted an instant in the discussion of any theme after she perceived it was distasteful. It was her delicate tact, perhaps more than the strength of her reasoning powers, that made her always keep clear of any subject likely to have a disagreeable effect on the mind of her auditor; intuitively she seemed to know exactly the style of deportment adapted to the character of the person with whom she dealt. To the servants she was as stately as a queen; to her master her air was extremely deferential, and to her mistress fondly obedient. From the first moment of her instalment into her new office she exercised a hidden though not less imperative sway over Liliás, whom she determined should never be allowed to regard her solely in the light of a menial. In her frequent soliloquies she would say, "I feel myself attached to her, and she shall be to me. True, she is a lady, richly endowed by nature and fortune, while I am only a village girl, without friends, beauty, or talent; yet there shall exist between us, if not friendship—confidence."

As Emma approached Liliás with a mixture of interest and respect in her countenance, her mistress could not but look almost affectionately at her. The glance was returned by one of apparently profound veneration and love.

"I shall not need your assistance to-night, Emma," said Liliás, "I have some letters to write before sleeping; but do you go to bed now, for I am sure you must be tired, and I can manage to undress very well."

"Indeed, my dear mistress, I am not in the least weary, and cannot think of letting you wait upon yourself," returned the girl, adding, with a suppressed sigh, and appealing expression of face, "Oh that I were happy enough to convince you that the greatest pleasure I know is to serve you!"

"Yes, yes, you are a good girl," said Liliás, rather absently, "and I believe devoted to me."

Her attendant replied by a grateful look, and after a pause said, "But you will let me wait in the next room till you have finished what you wish to do, will you not, so that I may assist you as usual?"

"No, Emma, not to-night," Miss Bellamy replied, firmly; "leave me now, and go to your room. Good night."

The girl returned the salutation reluctantly, and gathered up her work to depart; she had crossed to the door, and was opening it, when Liliás called her. With a triumphant look Emma retraced her steps and waited her mistress's commands.

"You may have that dress you are altering, and likewise the grey silk I bade you take the lace off," said Miss Bellamy.

Emma curtsied low, and expressed her thanks fervently, though she was not as much pleased as some girls might have been with so rich a gift, for certainly personal vanity was not to be numbered among her failings; however, she recollected that she was becoming more necessary to her mistress each day, and this reflection comforted her.

"If I could only find out what it is that constantly engages her in troubled thought, she could never look coldly on me again," mused Emma, "nor repulse my love: success shall crown my endeavours, and, whatever be the cost, she shall make me her confidante." Thus mentally resolving, the maid departed—not to do her mistress's bidding, but to form plots for the advancement of the end she had in view. She sat in Lilius's boudoir, mechanically employing herself in folding and unfolding her kerchief, from which occupation she would break off at intervals, to pace up and down the room with slow monotonous tread.

As the door closed upon the trim figure of her attendant, Lilius buried her face in her hands, and, conscious of her perfect security from listeners, uttered her thoughts aloud.

"Perhaps it is better I should not destroy them," she murmured, mournfully; "should they ever be found, they cannot prove much. Besides, if I attempt to obtain them, I may disturb Emma; her room is so little removed from the boudoir. Yes, they shall remain where they are, and the ring also."

The mention of the ring, which she had deposited in her desk upon the evening of the conversation with her father concerning it, brought her to a new train of ideas; and presently she continued,—

"How strange, how very strange for him to speak so meaningly of it! I could almost have fancied that he had penetrated into my heart, and from thence learned its secret history."

Once more she paused abruptly; a rush of thoughts crowded upon her mind, and for a brief space rendered the expression of any one of them impossible. Suddenly, after a few moments' silence, she exclaimed, "O Heaven! why must my sufferings, hour by hour, increase instead of diminish? What are my days but a succession of futile attempts at gaiety, and a dread of the most fearful description? And my nights, whose interminable lengths are broken by terrible waking visions, and dreams more frightful still, are if possible yet harder to endure: for me there is no rest, no hope. Where can I look for happiness? In the past? Ah, no! what does it show me but scenes of greatest horror? In the present there is nought but repentance and misery, and for the future blank despair; who then shall blame me," she cried, passionately, bowing her head upon the table near her, "if I take measures to rid myself of that which is insupportable, and shorten a life to which neither past, present, nor future, holds out respite from pain? I know the deed I contemplate is without recall or atonement; but there are sins more deadly, for by taking my life I injure no one, since to none am I longer capable of

giving happiness ; rather, if I submit to my destiny, shall I be the means of bringing down anguish upon those I most love. Why then do I hesitate ? Is an early grave worse than a maniac's cell, or annihilation than the ——— My God ! my God ! let me not think of it," she faintly articulated, and almost swooning with the emotion her secret terrors awakened, "it is too awful."

For more than a quarter of an hour she sat thus, her long dishevelled tresses sweeping the table upon which her throbbing temples rested ; no movement or sound, save now and then a piteous moan, betokening her to be alive.

A deadly stillness overhung the room and the whole house ; the September breeze that swept through the trees in the park was so gentle as to cause not the faintest rustling among their leaves, albeit many were beginning to fade, and hung but loosely on their branches. All the inhabitants of the grand old mansion were wrapt in slumber, all save its young mistress and her watchful maid, the latter continuing to arrange her handkerchief into a hundred minute folds, and then with a nervous jerk undo her labour, about which she would set again with the far-off manner of a troubled mind.

The former, when she again raised her face, walked direct to a jewel-box upon her dressing-table. It was full of handsome and costly trinkets, which Lillas unceremoniously placed upon the carpet. The last of her jewels was a magnificent bracelet set with diamonds ; it had been a marriage present from her father to her mother, yet it could not beguile from her one look, which it well merited, on account both of its associations and intrinsic beauty. With equal unconcern she laid it on the glittering heap, and returned to her task of emptying the casket ; next she raised a thick velvet pad that covered a small phial, containing a pale yellow liquid. This she took in her hand in a manner similar to that with which one might be expected to grasp a snake.

On it was labelled *Poison*.

Without replacing the jewellery, Lillas proceeded deliberately to pour out the contents of the fatal bottle into a cup, and with this in her hand passed through the open door to her sleeping-room, where, having placed the cup within reach, she threw herself upon the bed.

Again she hid her face, and thought. "Why do I deliberate ?" she broke out, agonizingly ; "it must be done to save me from a worse fate. Who will miss me ? My father——" At the mention of his name her tears flowed copiously, and her deep low sobs mingled with the distant sounds of the village clock, chiming the third hour.

Hastily restraining her tears, she cast back her ebon hair from her ghastly countenance, and, with a firm hand and resolute expression, took up the cup.

It was but a moment, and when she again set it down it was empty.

She felt her limbs grow stiff and cold, and her breath more laboured ;

she knew that the fell King was striding rapidly towards her, nay, that his fingers were even now clutching at her heart-strings, yet she experienced no alarm, no remorse for what she had done, but calmly waited to see the light of the candles fade away from her fast fleeting vision. A dreadful rattling was in her chest and throat, her arms drooped powerlessly by her side, a haze came over her eyes, and then her heart stayed its beatings.

"My beloved mistress, may I come in now? Forgive me for not obeying your orders, but I could not sleep without knowing you to be safe." It was Emma Adams who spoke at the door of Liliass's chamber some few moments after she had lost consciousness. No answer being given to her petition, Emma knocked loudly, and again begged to be admitted. "She may be asleep," she thought; but then the glare of the candles that issued through the apertures of the door convinced her that this was not the case, for Liliass never slept with a light in her room.

After knocking a third time the maid tried the door, which resisted her efforts, being fastened from within; she hesitated a moment, and then, although hopeless of effecting an entrance, gave a vigorous push; the door yielded, the bolt which Liliass had hastily drawn being but a little way in its socket.

Almost terrified by her success Emma approached the bed. The moon, which was at the full, shone with its cold, pure light upon Miss Bellamy's face, disclosing with fearful distinctness its deadly hue and distended orbs. A faint scream escaped the lips of the horrified girl, who for a second stood paralyzed with excessive fear. Shortly recovering herself, she took up one of the listless hands that lay upon the snowy counterpane; it was perfectly cold, and so were also Liliass's feet and arms.

Emma's fright did not deprive her either of the power of thought or movement; and, careful not to create any disturbance, she made for the housekeeper's room, where she procured some brandy, and from the kitchen a jug of warm water. Speedily, but still stealthily, she glided back to her mistress's bedroom, and with great labour succeeded in pouring a little of the brandy between Liliass's set teeth; then busied herself in divesting her of such articles of clothing as she could without moving the inanimate form, her eye being fixed all the while upon the pale, death-like face.

A groan at length startled, at the same time inspiring her with new hope. She poured a few drops more of the spirit down her mistress's throat, chafing her frigid feet and hands till she brought back a just perceptible tinge of warmth into them.

By this time Liliass had opened her eyes, but having gazed about her with a bewildered air, closed them again, uttering a low cry of acute pain.

"My dear, dear mistress, what have you done?" asked Emma, trembling between alarm and rapture.

Liliass did not reply, only cowered the lower beneath the bed-clothes;

and the maid, refraining to pursue her inquiry farther, begged she would drink freely of the water, which, acting as intended, dislodged the poison from her system.

Though removed from peril Miss Bellamy was greatly weakened, and, when disrobed of her day attire, lay almost fainting upon the bed.

The girl's request that she should be permitted to remain was acceded to by a thankful smile, which, fading gradually away, disclosed a countenance whose brilliant colour and soft roundness were departed, leaving in their stead an expression of complete prostration.

Silently Emma Adams hid the fatal phial, cleared away all marks of disorder from the apartment, and returned to her place by the bed. It was impossible for either Liliás or her attendant to sleep; each was too busily engrossed in reverie for that. A revolution as strange as healthful had come over the mind of Liliás; without entertaining feelings of gladness for her miraculous escape, she dismissed the desire for death which had previously maddened her to the commission of the rash deed. She felt it was demanded of her that she should live and bear her burthen, and she determined no longer to resist her fate. Before her suicidal attempt, the remembrance of her father was near saving her from the wickedness of appearing unbidden in the presence of her Creator, and now it consoled her to the interference of her maid, and well-nigh reconciled her to existence. The awful solemnity which invariably links itself with the thought of that "unknown bourne" had served to lessen the poignancy of her woes, and arouse in her a greater complaisance with respect to her hidden cares than she had hitherto felt; it appeared to her as if her restoration to life was an omen of renewed happiness, and tremblingly but cheerfully did her weary heart hail the idea of returning peace. She looked through the long vista of years that probably lay before her, and saw in the light of her new-born hope a quiet if not a contented life, and a serene end.

"If it be so, and I can trust for forgetfulness, I will school myself to exclude regret for what might have been my lot," she said, mentally, "and strive for calmness if I may not attain felicity."

What a holy, unbroken rest succeeded in her soul to the former terrible agitation! It was the reaction both of extreme misery and excitement: but a quarter of an hour back existence assumed to her only one phase, that of unmitigated wretchedness; now she lay in that delightful state of semi-consciousness, with flitting visions of future joy passing before her mind's sight.

Having lain in this dreamy state for more than an hour, Liliás's thoughts turned upon sleep, the better to conciliate which she moved her head upon her pillow, and in so doing descried the penetrating eyes of Emma Adams, whose presence, in her musings, she had forgotten. With an apprehensive shudder she returned the steady gaze, conscious that if she did not maintain her composure the girl would dive down into her most secret thoughts.

The time occupied by the mistress in reflection was not lost by the maid. With a triumph that revealed itself by a smile at the corners of her tightly closed mouth, and by a complacent kindling of her eyes, she reflected that she had now no need for the elaborate plans she had so racked her brains to coin, in order to win Miss Bellamy's confidence. Lillas had by her own act placed herself in her servant's power, and nothing that might occur in the future could restore them entirely to the relative positions they had occupied previously to this night : whether willing or unwilling, Lillas must make of her a friend, to prevent her becoming an enemy ; and an enemy possessed of so important a secret as was now in the hands of the calculating Emma was certainly not desirable.

Of course the maid was aware it was not a trifling cause that could prompt a naturally light-hearted girl to take away her life, even had she not been possessed of the quadruple blessings of kind friends, beauty, wealth, and high birth.

To discover this incentive to despair in her mistress was what she sought, and was fully resolved upon accomplishing. She knew it would require the utmost caution to extract the secret, whatever its subject, from the high-spirited Lillas, who, moreover, was not impressed with any great regard for her ; but she was convinced of effecting her purpose, and this conviction it was that filled her generally placid breast with tumultuous pleasure, and her scheming brain with projects of larger magnitude than had as yet made their abode there.

She loved her lady after her own fashion strongly, but it was not this alone that made her seek a participation of Lillas's cares, even though by revealing her sorrows her mistress should alleviate them. It was the girl's insatiable love of power that chiefly governed her actions. This propensity, intense as it had been from her childhood, had not, till her residence at the Hall in the position of lady's-maid, been awarded any scope.

It had driven her nearly crazy to be forced to obey the domineering housekeeper ; but she had done so smilingly, though in her heart she loathed her servility. To be polite under all circumstances, and ever watchful for a chance of elevation, had been the means by which she became raised above her fellow-servants, and upon a level with the hated housekeeper.

To be able to look down upon this woman, and all whom she had before been intimate with, was the object for which she existed—the guiding hope of her life ; and she intended that her mistress should be the instrument by which her ambitious dreams were to be made realities. Pride, overweening pride, was the ruling passion of her soul, and the one aim of her thoughts and deeds was to be elevated above her present sphere.

CHAPTER IX.

A CONFESSION AND A PROMISE.

ON the succeeding morning Lillas was too weak to leave her bed, and sent a message to excuse her non-attendance in the breakfast-room, to the effect that, having passed a sleepless night, she should not rise till time for luncheon.

A tear gathered in the baronet's eye as he contemplated the vacant seat at table; it reminded him so forcibly of the dreadful period of his daughter's absence a few months back.

"Surely she has not been silly enough to torment herself concerning what I said last night," he thought; "she should know me better than to fancy I desire to relinquish my guardianship over her. The foolish child! I must reassure her upon this point, if indeed it be necessary; meanwhile let her rest."

About the time that her father was thus soliloquizing, Lillas fell into a profound and refreshing slumber, from which she did not awake for many hours; when she did, Emma Adams, seated near her, was the first object that caught her attention. A slight expression of impatience flitted over her countenance at being thus closely watched, though she believed it to be the fruit only of kindness and affection. She was yet very languid, and sent a second message to her father to inform him that she should not join him till dinner.

A trifling refreshment was procured and brought to her by Emma, who seemed jealous of any one else doing the most trivial service for her.

Lillas ate but sparingly, and again settled herself for repose. This was not, however, permitted her, for, having removed the tray and closed the door, her maid resumed her stand by the bedside, and commenced talking of the solemn event of the previous night. To bid her hold her peace was what Lillas could not at any time have done, and now she *dared* not; she therefore patiently, though shudderingly, listened to the girl's account of how she had found and revived her. In conclusion, Emma said, in a steady, emphatic voice, and with eyes that never once removed themselves from her mistress's features,—

"I thought you would not die, so did not rouse anybody, believing that you would not like it to be known by Sir Shenton, or among the servants, that you had purposely taken poison, as of course they would look for some cause of your having done so."

Lillas felt much chagrined at the knowledge assumed by her attendant; but she merely answered,—

"You acted very rightly, and your fidelity and judgment shall not go unrewarded."

Emma was alarmed at the false move she saw by this reply she had made, and hastening to repair her character for disinterestedness, with a

depth of passion which she could throw at will into her calm voice, said,—

"It is not money I want as a reward for what I have done : to see you happy is my greatest desire, my only one ; and, as I am sure by disclosing whatever cause for trouble you may have to a sincere but very humble friend will be the best means of insuring consolation, I implore you to confide in me. Whatever you may want done, I pledge myself to do it, if you will only ease your mind by letting me be a sharer in your secret. Do not refuse me, or you may perhaps regret it."

"Do you threaten me?" cried her mistress, with flashing eyes.

"No, no, Miss Liliás, only warn you that if you scorn my assistance, you may be sorry some day, being in want of a faithful friend."

"True, you mean well, I am convinced, but you know not what you ask. To be a participator in my secret, you must bind yourself by a most solemn oath never to reveal, under any circumstances, what I may confide to you. Do you mind this?"

"Why should I," inquired Emma, "when whatever you may tell me would, without me giving you a promise, be as sacred as the grave itself? I ask not from curiosity to become your confidante, merely from an earnest wish to serve you."

Liliás reflected a moment, then murmured almost inaudibly, "So far I am safe. I will tell her."

"Listen," she said aloud ; "you must go into the adjoining rooms and secure them against invasion, for from them, you know, an eaves-dropper would not depart as simple as he came. When you have done this, return, and if you will take an oath of secrecy, I will reveal to you the cause of last night's deed."

The girl did as her mistress desired, reappearing in a few moments. Liliás had arisen from her bed, and, enveloped in a dressing-gown, occupied one of the many lounges scattered about the room. Her face was very pale, and its resolute look bordered upon sternness, as did her voice when she bade her maid seat herself on the stool at her feet. It did not take long to relate this tale of mystery and sorrow, and when it was finished Emma rose, and at Liliás's command began dressing her hair. Neither had spoken since the disclosure ; the relation of which had produced as notable an effect on Liliás as on her maid. She appeared more relieved than at any time since her return home, though much agitated. Emma Adams's expression, from one of surprise and dismay, changed by degrees to triumph ; she saw that from this day she would be elevated to the position of companion, in reality if not in name ; and fully were her expectations verified. For the most part Liliás's leisure hours—at least, those spent in the house—were passed with her. They sat together in the boudoir : the mistress, toying with a bouquet or playing with a favourite spaniel, would listen to the maid reading ; or else, while the latter was employed in that kind of work nominated

plain sewing, the former listlessly skimmed a few chapters of a novel, pencilling on the margin numberless varieties of heads, human and canine.

Lilias's health mended rapidly, and despite her continued dejection of spirits, her form resumed its wonted roundness, and her complexion a portion of its lost freshness; yet, despite this improvement, her zealous parent was not quite satisfied, and would hold frequent consultations with his medical friend, whose invariable reply to his fears and questions was, "My dear Sir Shenton, do not distress yourself; nothing material ails your daughter. Let her have her own way, and leave the rest to nature. If I give her medicine, it will only do her harm. Be patient."

But the baronet could not take this advice, nor be witness to the depression of the once happy Lilias, without imagining that physical disease was the root of it. He would not believe that the mind had anything to do with what gave him such uneasiness, and became nearly cross with the good doctor because he would not prescribe for her, or sympathize with his fears on her account.

During the summer months, which passed so heavily with both Sir Shenton and Miss Bellamy, Owen Arnold had established himself upon pretty much his old footing at the Hall; the companion of the baronet, the half lover, half brother of Lilias—for still he kept back the avowal which ever hovered upon his lips, ready to break forth in passionate protestations and eager confessions with the least encouragement—encouragement looked for in vain.

The November blasts had bared the noble trees within the grounds of Sedgley of their rich covering, leaving them gaunt, unsightly objects: the fogs and sleet, peculiar to that month, hung over the entire landscape, converting it into a bleak and barren waste. The ivy clinging to the trunks of the stout old oaks, and the moss covering the banks, were the only green things growing about the place, when I have mentioned the laurels and holly bushes. There was that air of desolation over the whole house and grounds that one never fails to associate with calamity or death, and too well the melancholy of the surrounding scene harmonized with the feelings of Owen Arnold, who, walking slowly from the hall to the entrance gate, gave a mournful and farewell glance around.

"Adieu!" he cried, in cadence of bitter sadness; "how long will it be before I revisit this spot, in which I have cherished such blissful visions, and where I leave my heart's best treasure?"

As he concluded he dashed a tear from his eye, and strode rapidly away.

He had done with college for more than a year, and had since been spending that desultory, aimless life, so trying for the old and calm to witness, so much more trying for the young and ardent to lead; and partly through the counsel of his father, and partly through the spirit of

craving unrest, he finally determined to make a start in life by enrolling himself under the British flag. A commission was purchased, the date fixed for his departure to the Crimea, where the troops were bound for active service, and the adieus to distant friends already made. Long had he been in a most torturing state of uncertainty as to what were Liliás's true sentiments towards him, and he had no choice but to end that uncertainty by a confession of his love; for to leave without telling her how dearly he regarded her was to give up, almost beyond hope, the chance of ultimately obtaining her hand. How many richer and nobler competitors would come forward during his absence! and might not one of the number bear away the prize? In truth, the task of bidding farewell to Liliás was more painful than all else to him; and it was with a sick heart he thought that in doing so he might also have to relinquish the trust he had so long cherished.

Having informed the baronet the necessity there was for his immediate leave-taking, he proposed in form for the hand of his daughter, frankly disclosing his fears.

Sir Shenton assured him he should be most happy to regard him as his future son-in-law, but that he could not bias his daughter's inclination, should it tend contrary to his hopes; with a great deal more to the same effect, and concluded by informing the anxious suitor that he would find Liliás in the conservatory.

To the conservatory, therefore, Owen repaired, passing into it from one of the French windows of the room in which his conversation with the baronet had been held. He paused to pluck a lovely white camellia that temptingly inclined itself towards him (for notwithstanding the severity of the season, the greenhouse was filled with choice flowers), and to this he added a sprig of fragrant myrtle, both to be presented to his idol, who was standing within a recess, absorbed in destroying a magnificent bouquet. Petal by petal, and leaf by leaf it fell, till nothing remained in her hand but the bare stems, and the ground at her feet was thickly strewn with the brilliant fragments. Her attitude was so graceful, her countenance so beautiful in its perfect repose, that her adorer hesitated to destroy the bright picture, and stood long contemplating it with rapt admiration. Liliás started slightly when he at length moved, and quickly turned to see who it was interrupted her meditations. As their eyes met, a vivid blush mantled her cheek, for she divined the reason of his coming, and it was with concealed uneasiness she waited for him to speak.

The words "I love you," simple as they appear when written, and easy though they are to write, are by no means simple or easy to *pronounce* in the presence of that particular fair in whose sight you wish best to stand. Owen was troubled by no constitutional bashfulness, and generally expressed himself with readiness and fluency; but when he found himself face to face with that haughty young beauty, whose cold set expression warned him how little love he had to look for from her:

somehow the eloquent speeches he had been about to address to her fell back upon his heart with a heaviness that smote it sorely. A minute or so, however, sufficed to set him comparatively at his ease, and in a few ardent and expressive words he told his errand.

Miss Bellamy turned from white to red, and from red to white again as she listened, and when he had finished she looked aside, leaving him unanswered.

"Speak to me, I implore you, if but one word," he urged, excitedly; "or permit me to construe your quietness into a token of love."

Lilias continued silent, though her silence was evidently not that of timidity.

Once more her adorer pleaded for an answer, and this time not without avail. "Owen Arnold," she exclaimed, almost wrathfully, "you ask me for that which I have no power to bestow."

"Have you then promised yourself to another?" the young man gasped forth, in the utmost dismay.

"No," returned Lilias, with a deeply mournful accent, "it is not that, but I can never love."

"Never!" echoed Owen, perfectly bewildered with grief.

"Never!" repeated she, with a sad emphasis that went to his very soul; then changing her tone to one of extreme bitterness, she added,—

"My heart is not formed for affection; but were it so, I should fear to bestow my fondness upon any man: to cast one's happiness upon so frail a bark as that of love is to invite its destruction."

"Oh, say not so," Owen answered with warmth; "I am conscious of the fallibility of all human felicity (and love, the greatest source of bliss, cannot be exempt from delusion and care), but that it does not extend as far as you imply is certain; unhappiness was never intended to be the entire portion of any one. You say that you could find no one to love: oh, will not you revoke this harsh decree? I know that for so much perfection I am no worthy partner, but if the most exclusive devotion and unwearying study to insure your happiness could suffice, this I can promise, and I think more than this. You greatly err, I am convinced, when you affirm that you are not susceptible. You, who are so kind, so tender with your dumb favourites, cannot be devoid of affection for your species. You do not dislike me, you could not have treated me with such confidence had this been the case; and friendship, as you know, often ripens into love; it will with you if you will but encourage it to do so. Oh, do not entirely refuse me; I will wait any time, if you will only give me the assurance that you have not irrevocably steeled yourself to all tender impression for me."

During this flow of words, delivered with the utmost earnestness of agonizing supplication, Miss Bellamy seemed only like so much adamant; it is true her bosom heaved painfully and her breath came in short quick gasps, but other signs of emotion than these she did not evince; her face

denoted nothing of surrender, and was if possible more coldly stern than before. Elevating her figure to its full height, in compressed tones she articulated,—

“It is impossible that you and I can ever be more to each other than friends. Why will you not take a plain answer, and spare us both unnecessary pain?”

“Then you will not give me the faintest hope to make life bearable?” the young man exclaimed, despondingly.

“My answer does not seem capable of comprehension,” Lilius rejoined, now really provoked,—“this may: I do not believe in your love; man’s affection is but another name for his selfishness, and his protestations of devotion nothing more than perjuries.” So saying she swept past him to the opposite end of the greenhouse, where she remained in angry thought.

Owen gazed at her while she thus addressed him, as one who hears something too dreadful and strange for credence; and when at length he could bring himself to reflect upon her words, he was stung, no less by the imputation on his love and truth, than by the withering irony of her voice, and the reproachful indignation of her face. He was perfectly at a loss to what cause to attribute this outbreak of impetuous wrath, and it took a few moments to soothe his ruffled dignity, which at first called loudly for dominion; but eventually affection triumphed over pride in the contest, and with a step alternately resolute and dejected, he crossed to where Miss Bellamy stood. His voice was made husky by excessive feeling, as he implored her to recall her cruel sentence, and at least give him credit for sincerity.

There was something very touching in his attitude, and the abject entreaty of his look and words, occasioning a complete revolution of sentiment in the ever-impulsive girl. With gentle compassion she gazed into his eyes, beaming with idolatrous devotion for her, and in tones modulated to the most subdued kindness and fullest contrition she said,—

“Think me not heartless because I slighted your professions just now; it was not I who spoke, but a demon of unbelief that sometimes possesses me, and for the time being acquires a control so complete as to prevent me giving my dearest friends the merit of candour. At these periods all around me seems warped and distorted into the most hideous shapes. You must forgive me, then, that pitiless outburst, and receive with faith the true expression of my feelings. Indeed I do not dislike you, whatever my rash speech may have implied, but regard you more than any one on earth after my father.”

A gleam of brightest joy irradiated her suitor’s features as he exclaimed, breathless with new-born hope,—

“Since you can graciously tell me that you care for no one better than myself, why refuse to entertain the idea of some day feeling a warmer sentiment than friendship? My perseverance may be unwarrantable, but oh! forgive me for asking if, in a certain number of years, say five or even ten,

you meet with no one whom you can love, will you bind yourself then to become my wife? It is so slight a chance, you will not surely deny it me;" and with a deep sigh and altered voice he continued, "Ah! what hope can I have that for so long a term you will continue fancy-free?"

"Should I give you the promise you require, your hope would not be without foundation," rejoined Lillas, reflectively; "for, as I have before said, I am but little inclined to the delusive fancies of love."

Her anger had quite disappeared, and her generous nature prompted her to make every amends to her companion for the injustice she had previously manifested.

"It is a very singular proposal," she resumed, half smiling, and yet with a tinge of apprehension, "but its unusuality is a recommendation."

What a strange sentence in connection with such a subject! but then she was a strange being who uttered it, full of romantic fancies and wild flights from one extreme to another. Here she was smiling upon, and speaking in the most conciliatory terms to, the very man on whom she had but a few moments back thrown the bitterest of taunts.

Owen even looked surprised at her speech; observing which, Lillas's disposition again varied. Its next turn was that of seriousness.

"This is a solemn as well as peculiar compact you propose, but I will enter into it—" Owen interrupted her with an overjoyed ejaculation, "—upon the condition," she went on composedly, "that your behaviour to me be merely friendly, either before witnesses or in private communion. Farther than this, I demand that it be kept a secret from your parents and mine. I will be not unmerciful enough to give you so long as five years' suspense, and if by my twentieth birthday I am as heart-whole as now, you may claim my hand. But allow me to think myself free till then; let me have unrestrained liberty of feeling as well as action."

There was positive pleading in the accent of the last sentence, which made Owen long almost to restore her conditional promise. It was so hard for him, who loved her with such sincerity, to fancy she viewed with dread the prospect of their possible union. He, nevertheless, consented to comply with her injunctions of secrecy, and—though it must be owned very reluctantly—acknowledged the wisdom of her advice to abstain from forming extravagant expectations.

THE LUSIAD.

THE memoirs of literary men of eminence, it has been said, are seldom possessed of great interest or romantic incident; but the life of the author of "*Os Lusíadas*" possesses both interest and incident in a high degree. The writer of this great and solitary Portuguese epic—of all epics perhaps the most charming in versification—was born at the time when the discoveries and conquests of Portugal in Asia, Africa, and America, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, had brought that country to the zenith of her material prosperity, and Camoens and his contemporary, Gil Vicente, soon after brought the language and literature of their native land to its culminating point likewise. This double glory, however, was destined soon to fade. After the conquest of Portugal by Spain, the Portuguese lost all feeling of independence, gradually renouncing even their native tongue, and adopting that of their rulers; and though it is long since a reaction took place, and Portugal has long been independent, no Portuguese writer has since then ever attained any eminence, or anything beyond a mere local reputation; certainly none have ever approached in ability or beauty to the author of the "*Lusiad*."

Luis de Camoens was the son of Simon Vaz de Camoens, the commander of a vessel of war, who, while yet the future poet was but an infant, was shipwrecked at Goa, and the greater part of his fortune perished with him. The poet's widowed mother provided for his education at Coimbra, where he wrote many poems and sonnets, of which but few remain; after his university career he appeared at Court, whence for some indiscretion he was soon afterwards banished. King John III. of Portugal was at this time preparing an armament against Africa, which Camoens joined; and at an engagement before Ceuta he greatly distinguished himself, while at another battle with the Moors at the Straits of Gibraltar he lost his right eye by a splinter. Returning to Lisbon by the permission of the King, the poet failed to find the favour he sought and thought he deserved, and soon after, disgusted at this neglect, he left Lisbon, resolved never to return. During all the exciting scenes through which Camoens had already passed, he never neglected the cultivation of his poetical powers, and, as he himself expressed it, "one hand the pen, and one the sword employed." The poet now sailed for India; but of the four ships which composed the squadron, only one, that in which he was, reached the destined port; the others foundered at sea. When the ship arrived, Camoens found that the King of Cochín had applied to the Portuguese colony for assistance against the King of Pimenta, and, without allowing himself any rest after his long voyage, the poet at once joined this expedition, in which he again greatly distinguished himself. On his return to Goa, his imprudence in writing some satires upon the abuses of

the administration gave offence to the Portuguese viceroy, who banished him to the island of Macao, a Portuguese settlement in the Bay of Canton. Here, though a banished man, his friends procured Camoens honourable employment, in which he acquired a sufficient fortune; while in his leisure hours he added to the "*Lusiad*," which he had long before commenced to write. Five years after his banishment from Goa a new viceroy was placed there, and Camoens resigned his appointment at Macao, being desirous of returning to the former place. The poet accordingly freighted a ship for Goa, in which he embarked with all his fortune; but unfortunately was shipwrecked at the mouth of the river Mecon, and all he had acquired sank to the bottom—Camoens swimming to the shore with one hand, while in the other he grasped his poems, all he found himself possessed of when he stood poor and friendless on that unknown shore—gaining thus an experience, however, which he used with great effect in the "*Lusiad*."

At Mecon Camoens remained till opportunity was given for returning to Goa, where the new viceroy treated him as a friend while he continued in power; but another viceroy having arrived, the enemies of Camoens accused him of malversation at Macao, and though the poet successfully refuted the charge, his creditors contrived to keep him in prison for some time, till a few gentlemen at Goa contributed to defray his debts and set him at liberty. Chagrined and annoyed at this treatment, Camoens, after an absence of sixteen years, returned to Portugal, which he found suffering under a dreadful pestilence, and this prevented the immediate publication of the "*Lusiad*," as he had intended. Three years afterwards, in 1572, the epic was printed, the book being dedicated to the young King Sebastian, who granted the poet a small pension. Sebastian perished in an expedition against the Moors, and his successor, Henry, withdrew the pension. Camoens now suffered all the pangs of poverty, being even frequently in want of bread; and an Indian servant, a native of Java, who through all the troubles of Camoens had remained faithful to him, begged in the streets of Lisbon at night in order to support his unfortunate master throughout the day. The poet soon after died in misery in an hospital at Lisbon, neglected and forsaken, at the age of sixty-two—Portugal's brightest genius, and as chivalrous and courageous a hero as that country ever produced. "I saw him die," says a monk, "in an hospital at Lisbon, without having a shroud to cover his remains, after having sailed 5,500 leagues, and having borne arms victoriously in India—a warning for those who weary themselves by studying day and night without profit, as the spider who spins his web to catch flies."

The "*Lusiad*" is what may be termed an heroic poem, and is a picturesque grouping of all the interesting events in the history of Portugal—the discovery of the passage round the Cape to India being the groundwork of the whole. There is in it a mixing up of heathen deities with the deeds of Christians, which may be thought strange, but which was

not thought out of place in the days of Camoens, they being introduced on the same principle as that which introduces the heathen god of love so much into modern erotic poetry, and which is yet considered in accordance with good taste.

Camoens' great work starts with an account of Vasco da Gama's expedition to India—

“Through seas where sail was never spread before,
Beyond where Ceylon lifts her spicy breast,
And waves her woods above the watery waste.”

But it is only after the ships have doubled the Cape, and are steering towards the shores of India, that the epic introduces mythological scenes and characters. As they journeyed over the then unknown seas, Jupiter beheld them, and summoned a council of the gods on Mount Olympus to deliberate regarding the fate of the voyagers and upon that of India. A dispute speedily arose among the gods—Venus and Bacchus being the principal leaders in the altercation which took place. Bacchus wished to destroy the voyagers, lest the fame of his own exploits in India might be eclipsed by them; Venus, on the other hand, wished them to succeed; and Mars coming to her aid, Jove acceded to the request of Venus, and promised that the exploring expedition should receive his favour and protection. The vessels in the course of their voyage arrive at Madagascar, where they are at first received favourably, but the King learning that the Portuguese are Christians, conceives a deadly hatred against them, which is further inflamed by Bacchus, who has disguised himself as a Mahomedan priest. A conflict ensues, in which the natives are defeated, and the chief, feigning regret at what has happened, consents to give them a pilot to guide them to the shores of India, but charges the pilot to entrap and ruin the adventurers. The traitorous pilot therefore guided the expedition to Quiloa, where the Portuguese were certain to have been made slaves had they landed; but Venus caused a strong wind to blow, which carried them past the harbour of Quiloa, so that they could not enter. From thence the pilot guided them to another port, where if they had landed they would also have received cruel treatment; but Venus again interfered on their behalf, and raised such a storm that the Moors on board were terrified, and sought safety by swimming ashore. Gama, much distressed, now began to wish for some friendly shore, where he might have rest; and Venus, hearing his prayer, repaired to the throne of Jupiter and preferred her request that he would now favour the Portuguese adventurers:—

“O Thunderer! O potent sire!
Shall I in vain thy kind regard require?
Alas! and cherish still the fond deceit,
That yet on me thy kindest smiles await?
Ah, heaven! and must that valour which I love
Awake the vengeance and the rage of Jove?”

Yet moved with pity for thy fav'rite race
 I speak, though frowning on thine awful face
 I mark the tenor of the dread decrea,
 That to thy wrath consigns my sons and me.
 Yes ! let stern Bacchus bless thy partial care,
 His be the triumph, and be mine despair.
 The bold advent'rous sons of Tago's clime
 I loved—alas ! that love is now their crime.'

* * * * *

The thundering god her weeping sorrows eyed,
 And sudden threw his awful state aside ;
 With that mild look which stills the driving storm,
 When black-roll'd clouds the face of heaven deform ;
 With that mild visage and benignant mien
 Which to the sky restores the blue serene,
 Her snowy neck and glowing cheek he press'd,
 And wiped her tears, and clasp'd her to his breast ;
 Yet she, still sighing, dropp'd the trickling tear,
 As the chid nursling, moved with pride and fear,
 Still sighs and moans, though fondled and caress'd,
 Till thus great Jove the Fates' decrees confess'd :—
 'O thou my daughter, still beloved as fair,
 Vain are thy fears, thy heroes claim my care :
 No power of gods could e'er my heart incline,
 Like one fond smile, one powerful tear of thine.'"

Jupiter accordingly sent Mercury to warn Vasco da Gama from hostile shores, and the admiral steers for Melinda, where he is hospitably received and entertained. Here the King's favour is gained, and Vasco relates to him an account of Portugal and of his own adventures. After telling where Portugal is situated, Da Gama gives a history of his country's long conflict with the Moors, and the bravery of the Christian princes who wrested the kingdom from the swarthy usurpers. He afterwards gave the story of the patriot Moniz, who, when Alonzo Enriquez was prisoner to the Castilian monarch, appeared as a suppliant before him, and gained Alonzo's deliverance by promising that Portugal should ever be a dependency of Castile. But Moniz knew well that this promise would never be fulfilled by his master, and when therefore the day arrived that Enriquez should have done homage at the throne of Castile, Moniz appeared with his wife and children before the Castilian monarch, giving them up as well as himself to death for the wilful perjury he had committed. But the King was generous, and instead of taking the lives of those thus put into his power, he showered favours upon them, rewarding Moniz thus for the sincere fidelity which had been shown, and which the King's chivalrous spirit well knew how to appreciate.

The admiral then told of the battle of Ourique, by which Alonzo Enriquez laid the foundation of the future kingdom of Portugal by defeating the Moors, and driving them forth the country. He next related the touching story of Inez de Castro, and we cannot refrain from giving

a short sketch of her sad and tragical fate, which has been made the subject of many poems and tragedies. Inez was related to the royal family of Castile, and was appointed lady in waiting to the wife of Dom Pedro, son of Alfonso IV. of Portugal. Dom Pedro's wife having died, the beauty of Inez captivated the Dom, and they were privately married, meeting secretly for that purpose in a convent at Coimbra. Their secret was, however, revealed to the King, and Alfonso, believing that this marriage would prove injurious to the interests of young Ferdinand, Dom Pedro's son by his first wife, agreed with his council that Inez should be put to death. Seizing the opportunity of Dom Pedro being absent on a hunting expedition, the King hastened to the convent where Inez was concealed; but the sight of the beautiful princess, who, with her children, prostrated themselves before the King, and sought for mercy, almost won Alfonso from his purpose. He hesitated, however, only for a few minutes, and his evil counsellors soon gained from him permission to put her to death, and she fell pierced with the daggers of assassins.

"Inez, while her eyes to heaven appeal,
 Resigns her bosom to the murdering steel;
 That snowy neck, whose matchless form sustain'd
 The loveliest face, where all the graces reign'd,
 Whose charms so long the gallant prince inflamed,
 That her pale corse was Lisbon's queen proclaim'd;
 That snowy neck was stain'd with spouting gore,
 Another sword her lovely bosom tore.

* * * *

As when a rose erewhile of bloom so gay,
 Thrown from the careless virgin's breast away,
 Lies faded on the plain, the living red,
 The snowy white, and all its fragrance fled;
 So from her cheeks the roses died away,
 And pale in death the beauteous Inez lay.
 With dreadful smiles, and crimson'd with her blood,
 Round the wan victim the stern murderers stood,
 Unmindful of the sure though future hour,
 Sacred to vengeance and her lover's power."

Dom Pedro threatened a revolt against his father for the cruel murder which he had thus sanctioned; but being persuaded against this course of procedure by the Queen, he patiently waited his time. Within two years from the death of Inez Alfonso died, and Dom Pedro succeeded him as King of Portugal. Alfonso, before his death, had recommended the murderers of Inez to fly the country, and accordingly they had taken refuge with Peter the Cruel of Castile. The oppression of Peter had some time before this caused several of his nobles to seek refuge from his stern rule in Portugal; and now, for the purpose of getting the murderers of Inez within his power, Pedro arranged for an exchange of fugitives with Peter the Cruel. Two of the murderers were accordingly given up, and both were first tortured and then burned to death. Pedro, some time

after, in an assembly of his nobility, produced proofs before them of his lawful marriage with Inez de Castro, and then ordered the corpse of Inez to be removed from the grave, clothed in royal robes, and seated on a throne, with a crown upon her head, the nobility being compelled to do homage to the dead Inez as to a living queen. When this strange and awful solemnity was completed, the body was again consigned to the grave, over which Dom Pedro erected a splendid monument.

Da Gama then related to the King of Melinda several other passages in his country's history, and coming down to the time of Emmanuel—the reigning king—tells the history of the present voyage, and what led to its being undertaken. Emmanuel saw in a dream a strange landscape, and two hoary genii appeared, inviting him to the conquest of India. When morning came the King summoned his council and related his vision, particularly referring to Da Gama as the one who, among his peers, he believed to be the man most fitted to conduct this purposed expedition to a successful issue.

“ My heart could bear no more. ‘ Let skies on fire,
Let frozen seas, let horrid war conspire,
I dare them all,’ I cried, ‘ and but repine
That one poor life is all I can resign.’ ”

The enthusiasm with which this purposed voyage was received by the youth of Lisbon was great, and numbers offered their services as part of the expedition, although the populace generally were displeased. On the morning of their departure the beach was crowded with people who had come to see the ships sail, and the admiral relates several scenes which then took place. He tells of a hoary sire, who came to win back his son :—

“ ‘ Oh, whither run,
My heart's sole joy, my trembling age's stay,
To yield thy limbs the great sea-monster's prey ?
To seek thy burial in the raging wave,
And leave me cheerless sinking to the grave ?
Was it for this I watch'd thy tender years,
And bore each fever of a father's fears ?
Alas, my boy ! ’ ”

Then a youthful bride, with disordered hair and tearful eyes, shrieks out,—

“ ‘ Oh, where, my husband, where, to seas unknown,
Where wouldst thou fly me, and my love disown ?
And wilt thou, cruel, to the deep consign
That valued life, the joy, the soul of mine ? ’ ”

The last the admiral speaks of was an old man, who spoke with grief and anger of the expedition, and the vain-glory which had prompted it :—

“ ‘ Curst be the man who first on floating wood
Forsook the beach, and braved the treacherous flood !
Oh, never, never may the sacred Nine,
To crown his brows, the hallow'd wreath entwine !

Nor may his name to future times resound;
 Oblivion be his meed, and hell profound !
 Curst be the wretch, the fire of heaven who stole,
 And with ambition first debauch'd the soul ! ”

While thus the old man inveighs against them, the ships spread their canvas to the winds, and they sail away over the watery waste on their unknown route.

Detailing several particulars regarding their voyage, Da Gama describes a hideous phantom, towering over the flood, which appeared to him at the Cape. This spirit of the vasty deep was the Spirit of the Cape, and he gave the admiral prophetic details of the evils which awaited the further voyaging of the adventurers, and of all who might avail themselves of their experience to venture on the same route to the far East. Gama at last ventures to ask who and what the spirit is, and sternly answering, the aerial phantom said,—

“ ‘ In me behold ! ’ he cried,
 While dark-red sparkles from his eyeballs rolled,—
 ‘ In me the Spirit of the Cape behold,
 That rock by you the Cape of Tempests named,
 By Neptune’s rage in horrid earthquakes framed,
 When Jove’s red bolts o’er Titan’s offspring flamed.
 With wide-stretch’d piles I guard the pathless strand,
 And Afric’s southern mound unmoved I stand :
 Nor Roman prow, nor daring Tyrian oar,
 E’er dash’d the white wave foaming to my shore ;
 Nor Greece, nor Carthage, ever spread the sail
 On these, my seas, to catch the trading gale.
 You, you alone, have dared to plough my main,
 And with the human voice disturb my lonesome reign. ”

But at last the fiend vanished, and Gama prayed to Heaven that,—

“ ‘ As o’er our head
 The fiend dissolved, an empty shadow, fled ;
 So may his curses by the winds of heaven
 Far o’er the deep, their idle sport, be driven ! ’ ”

After several adventures of minor interest, Gama tells of the expedition being visited by a dreadful disease, and of the treachery at Quiloa, and concludes his narrative.

The King of Melinda, pleased with the Portuguese adventurers, gave them good entertainment, and furnished them with pilots to guide them on their further course. Their old enemy Bacchus, however, again endeavours to prevent their onward progress ; this time he sought the aid of Neptune, and at his appeal the sea-god consented to let loose the winds and waves against the ships, who were sailing calmly before a gentle breeze. Suddenly the tempest burst upon them,—ropes broke and masts fell before the fury of the blast ; but when the storm was apparently about to wreck them utterly, Venus saw their danger, and came again to

their aid by sending her attendant nymphs to quell the furious tempest, and almost instantly the winds die away, and the sea becomes calm.

Next morning they arrived at the shores of Calicut, to whose monarch Gama despatched a herald to tell of his arrival, to whom Gama himself was also afterwards guided by a Portuguese Moor, who had found his way overland to this far-off country. Seated on a couch blazing with gold and jewels sat the King, when Gama was presented to him; and the admiral, not suppliantly, but as the ambassador of a great king, proffered friendship, and asked that commercial relations might be established between the two countries. The King was to give his reply next day, when the ships of Gama were visited by the prime minister of the King of Calicut. Here again Bacchus resorts to stratagem to destroy the adventurers, and, disguising himself, he sought the palace of the King, whom he found sleepless, and surrounded by a number of diviners, trying to discover what would be the result to India of the visit of the Portuguese; and Bacchus conjured up before them visions of war, disease, and famine, thus rousing the anger of the King against the voyagers. The following day Gama was told that no belief was had in his professed mission, and that his ships must be surrendered to Calicut. Gama, who had left his ships under the command of his brother Paulo, knew that the fleet would do its duty, and told the King that whatever he might do to him, no orders despatched in his name would alter the course determined on by the Portuguese. Irritated at the admiral's boldness, the monarch gave orders that his fleet should attack Da Gama's, and accordingly the native ships advanced to surround the Portuguese; but they were quickly dispersed by the well-directed cannon of the adventurers, who next proceeded to bombard the city. Gladly now would the Indian monarch treat with Gama, but he in his turn refused, and demanded to be instantly conveyed back to his ships.

The great object of the voyage being gained, Da Gama at once weighed anchor and returned to Europe, carrying with him specimens of the products of Calicut, to show the wealth of the lands to which he had voyaged. On their homeward route Venus prepared a festival for the adventurers on an island. Here they were sumptuously entertained, and a prophetic nymph related to Gama the future achievements of his country—more especially telling of the fame it would gather by the deeds of those—

“ Who through the seas, by Gama first explored,
 Shall bear the Lusian standard and the sword,
 Till every coast where roars the Orient main,
 Bless'd in its sway, shall own the Lusian reign;
 Till every pagan king his neck shall yield,
 Or, vanquish'd, gnaw the dust on battle-field.”

Gama, however reluctantly, at length left this enchanted spot, and throughout the rest of the voyage homeward his fleet had gentle winds and calm seas.

With many faults in execution and design, the "Lusiad" possesses a perfect unity and interest; and the earnest patriotism of the poet, as shown in the epic, as well as the grace of his versification, has given the "Lusiad" a charm which foreigners, as well as the countrymen of Camoens, can admire and appreciate. So much has the "Lusiad" been held in esteem in Portugal, that hardly any Portuguese poet has ever selected any model but its author; indeed, this is said to have been overmuch the case, for other authors who have ventured to try another path have been generally decried and overlooked, however deserving they may have been. Camoens certainly furnished models enough, for he has written in almost every kind of composition peculiar to the age in which he lived; but no other work of his equals in merit the "Lusiad." His sonnets were numerous, and of his miscellaneous poems, odes, and songs, many have been lost. He also wrote a beautiful paraphrase of the psalm, "Super flumina Babylonis," in which, in the finest poetry, the Jews are represented as hanging on the willows their harps, and lamenting over their exile from the land of their nativity. The versatile genius of Camoens also led him to write several comedies; but they are inferior, and unworthy the reputation of the author of the "Lusiad,"—a poet who has been the chief if not the only boast of his native country, in a literary point of view, and almost the only Portuguese writer whose fame has extended beyond the Peninsula.

CÆLO ICTUS.

ACROSS ROSS-SHIRE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THREE WEEKS IN SKYE."

WE had the pleasure of meeting at this northern Spa Captain Grant, friend and comrade of the lamented Captain Speke, who, in the quiet retirement of the place, was preparing for the press his "Walk across Africa." Day by day did he take his "constitutional," with bent head and downcast eyes, his brain no doubt at white heat, excogitating the best arrangement for his next chapter. As the reader may be already aware, the gallant Nile-explorer is now married to a niece of Sir Peter Laurie's, who, by the way, is a cannie Scotchman, and once on a time, like many of his countrymen, crossed the border barefooted for the south, and rose from being an apprentice lad to be saddler in ordinary to his Majesty George the Fourth, amassing a large fortune besides, thirty thousand of which are reported to have been the fair bride's "tocher." I wonder if the gallant captain's ears tingled sorely one evening he chanced to be the subject of rather a hot discussion we had in the inn, when a gentleman present began to sneer at the well-earned fame of the Nile-men, and pointed to the unrequited and untrumpeted labours of hundreds of town missionaries and Bible-women, who have walked twice or thrice the breadth of Africa, and encountered, not certainly the perils of the bow and arrow or of the wilderness, but perils as sudden and as fatal—pestilence, fever, small-pox, and their train,—and remain unknown and uncared for, and in the end, perhaps, left to die in an hospital or starve in a workhouse? In reply, I tried to persuade him that "one star differs from another in glory," and that men like Grant and Speke are the pioneers of civilization, and in a sense, too, the ambassadors of Christ, reminding him that their discoveries stimulate interest and call forth benevolent exertions towards thousands who are equally God-forsaken with the Arabs of our cities. Missionary effort always goes hand in hand with commerce, and in opening up hitherto unknown regions to the enterprise of the latter, the explorer becomes the secondary agent, under heaven, in spreading the blessings of pure morals and a pure religion among thousands of the human race.

Should any of our dyspeptic friends be doomed to stay the full three weeks recommended by the faculty, they need not fear that time will hang heavy on their hands, for this Scottish Harrogate lies in the centre of the sweetest scenery of the most glorious county in Britain. Ross means literally "the moor," and peat-moss is certainly to be found in great abundance; but there is mountain, hill, river, and valley in profusion, with sweet patches here and there of rich pasture and fertile grain-fields, as valuable as any in the Lowlands. A dozen separate excursions might be named within the radius of as many miles;—the ascent of Ben Wyvis, the king of Ross-shire mountains, which is only a hundred feet less high than Snowdon, and commands a magnificent prospect; a day in the woods of

Castle Leod, which, through the kindness of the Duchess of Sutherland, are open to the public on certain days, and where may be seen some of the finest chestnut trees in Scotland,—the house itself, which consists of five stories and attics, being truly baronial in appearance; a trip to Brahan Castle, the ancient seat of the Earls of Seaforth; to Beaully Priory and the Falls of Kilmorack; to Fairbairn Tower and the Falls of Orrin; and to the various other places mentioned in the following pages, would afford new and delightful interest for every succeeding day. If, in the quaint words of Fuller, “some shires, Joseph-like, have a better coat than others, and some, with Benjamin, have a more bountiful mess of meat belonging unto them, every county having a child’s portion, as if God in some sort observed gavel-kind in the distribution of His favours,” Ross-shire is the Benjamin—the youngest son,—having in respect of beauty and sublimity of scenery a mess five times that of his brethren.

Strathpeffer will be one of the chief stations on the Dingwall and Kyleakin Railway, so that in the course of time a tourist may breakfast at the Spa, dine with his friends in Edinburgh or Glasgow in the evening, and, after a sound sleep, be back again under the broad shadow of Ben Wyvis on the evening following. An impetus will thus be given to feuing, for which the proprietrix is willing to give every facility, traces being visible already of feus being taken off.

“Parting is such sweet sorrow” was certainly true to us on bidding good-bye to the Spa, my friend, who is a bachelor, being loth indeed to tear himself away from the angelic influences of the place; and I noticed him turn again and again to look behind him as we toiled up the long brae that led us forward on our journey. Our last view of the sweet valley was from the summit of the road, near a pretty villa of Sir James Matheson’s, member for Ross-shire, and one of the largest proprietors in the county. Passing Jamestown, a small village about half a mile farther on, the chief edifice in which is of course a Free Church, the valley of the Conon came into view—that sweet river Conon (“gathering of waters”) whose scenery in different places has reminded many of the Rhine, and was the source of so much delight to the author of “The Testimony of the Rocks,” the father of the Old Red fossils, whose early genius (albeit nature had not made him a poet) was fired to paint its charms in verse:—

“Much I loved at eventide
Through Brahan’s lonely woods to stray;
To mark thy peaceful billows glide,
And watch the sun’s declining ray.”

To the left of us were the rough precipices of Brahan, clothed with pine, which “belong to the great conglomerate base of the Old Red system,” against which the sea must have dashed thousands of years ago, but which are now high and dry in the landscape, like the friths and sounds of that ancient sea which now form the deep valleys of Strathgarve, Strathbran,

and Strathpeffer; in front were the cultivated slopes of Arcan, with Muirtown Castle and the pale spectre of Fairbairn Tower behind, and in the blue background the lofty Ben Vaichart ("the mountain of the upper byre"); while to the right yawned the real jaws of the Highlands, Strathconon and Strathgarve, with the picturesque Torr Achilty between them,—a comprehensive view which is not wholly lost till the traveller reaches the village of Contin, seven miles from Dingwall, where two roads meet, one leading to the Muir-of-Ord and the other to the west coast.

Contin (meeting of the waters) is a pretty village, whose church and manse are built on an island, formed by Raasay water, and constituting the glebe. The Torr, a word meaning a hill of an abrupt or conical shape, as in Chee Torr and the Mam Torr of Derbyshire, looks extremely picturesque from this point, and like Dunquoich, at Inveraray, though larger, resembles a Celtic drinking-cup set on its mouth. It seems to belong to the "craig and tail" species of hill, though the tail appears to stick out in the wrong direction, seeing that the glacial currents must have set out towards the Cromarty Frith. A garment of brushwood clothes its under parts, but the upper half has nothing to hide its stony nakedness, save a few green patches here and there, on which sheep and goats browse all the summer and make a pleasant bleating, heard distinctly in the low grounds beneath. On leaving Contin we met two Englishmen doing the road at a rapid rate, one of them limping terribly, and evidently seeing nothing more than any donkey might in a costermonger's cart. Quantity, and not enjoyment, seems to be the order of the day with such tourists, who on returning to Camberwell or Kennington love to boast of their thirty or forty miles a day.

The road now trends to the north-west, following the Raasay, or, as it is oftener called, the Blackwater, owing to its dark colour, and passes the lodge-gate of Coul House, the residence of Sir William Mackenzie, Bart., a handsome building, but which cannot be seen from the road. Coul, I believe, is a Celtic word, meaning nook or back of a hill; Raasay being Scandinavian, or Gaelic corrupted by Danish pronunciation. A little farther on, the road takes a sharp turn in crossing the Blackwater; but the railway is to run right on, and cross the stream higher up. Just beyond the bridge is Achilty Inn, where we were glad to rest our limbs preparatory to the ascent of Torr Achilty, which, like Hugh Miller, when he waited for Click-Clack, the carter, we had ample time to do. We found the inn comfortable, its front windows looking out upon a garden, which, for the Dutch precision and primness of its hedges and hollies, would certainly have pleased Evelyn himself. Two or three days might be profitably and pleasantly spent here, there being plenty of sport for the angler in the Blackwater and Loch Achilty, along the shore of which we drove, and found its soft loveliness of scenery equal if not superior to that of Windermere. Its little gems of islets are favourite resorts for picnic parties from the Spa. On Torr Achilty—which, by the way, is quite a

paradise for the botanist—we had an excellent view, fifty miles in diameter at least; the Cromarty, the Moray, and the Beaulieu Friths lying in the blue east, and to the west the grim peaks of Sgor-an-Iolair (the Eagle's Peak) and Sgor-a-Vullin (Peak of the Mill), with hundreds of minor hills between, on whose rugged sides not a single green field or human habitation could be seen. At our feet were the fords of the Conon, where Hugh Miller, in attempting to cross with an iron lever on his shoulder, was almost borne down by the overwhelming strength of the current, and in danger of losing his nether garments, the chief thought that filled his mind in the excitement and danger of the moment being, "How in the name of wonder shall I get a kilt to borrow?" Torr Achilty is easy of ascent on the west side, though we were assailed by a shrill voice from the cottages, crying out, "Ye'll lose your ways whatever; wait till I get the shepherd to ye; to be sure, and the shepherd will know best." Unless the tourist be anxious to have a chat about "hoggs, yowes, and gimmers," and wishes to be initiated into the mysteries of wool-clipping, let him push on without a word.

Beyond Achilty Inn (Achilty, by the way, means the field with small burns running through it) there is as pretty a bit of road as is to be met with in the Highlands. For about a couple of miles the white-breasted highway creeps up the shoulder of a hill which is clothed with the loveliest birchen wood that Ross-shire can boast of. After passing Craig Darroch (Rock of the Oak), a shooting lodge of Captain Murray's, which commands a fine view of Loch Achilty, the eye is delighted with a succession of sylvan views which, with the morning sun shining down upon them, appeared to us inexpressibly charming. It was about eight o'clock when we passed through: the sunshine glinting on the silvery pools and sparkling rapids of the Blackwater, the water murmuring alongside, the blue heavens peeping through the open spaces above, with a glimpse now and then of the surly-faced Ben Wyvis, drowsy and ill-natured after the too short sleep of the summer night, and exasperated no doubt because we had turned his flanks without his having had the chance of sending a volley of hail, a shower of rain, or even a stray flake of snow in our faces, formed a picture which exhilarated our minds and delighted our hearts.

Then there were the Falls of Rogie (meaning unknown), which the tourist must not miss on any account, and which are inferior in beauty only to the Falls of Moness and of Foyers. Some have likened them to the Falls of Tivoli; and a Jamaica gentleman, whom we met farther on, assured us that they are the counterpart of Trenton Falls, in Oneida county, New York. Be like what they may, they have a soft attractiveness of their own, which is peculiarly charming. They are pretty well seen from the highway, there being a vista at the proper point, but every tourist who has leisure should spend an hour or two beside them. They are formed by a break in the channel of the Blackwater, which for some

distance above has been coming down at its ease in a broad, full stream, when, finding its freedom suddenly menaced by an ambuscade of rocks, it rushes past them in white-faced terror, and, with its forces broken in twain, tumbles headlong over the precipice. A graceful chain-bridge, from which the best view is obtained, has been thrown over the chasm a few yards below. The broad sheet of foaming water,—

“ Ever plash-plashing down its cold white stream ;”

the thin spray, which “ rising meets wi’ misty showers ;” the rich carpeting of ferns that cover the sides of the ravine; the continuous roar of the cascade, drowning alike the song of blackbird, lintwhite, and mavis, and the cooing of the wood-pigeon, though favourable perhaps to the whispered cooing of lovers; the hill-sides adorned with fragrant birks and lofty firs; the deep black pool below, in which one may watch—

“ The lightly jumpin’ glowerin’ trouts,
That through the waters play,”

form the individual elements of a scene that, somewhat similar to the Druim, in Strath Glass, rivals in picturesque beauty the Pass of Killiecrankie.

To most tourists from the south the groves of birch-wood will form the chief charm of the scene, as indeed they do in most Highland glens. When fully developed the common birch (*Betula alba*), which Coleridge christened the “ lady of the woods,” with its shining tremulous leaves and silvery bole—like its cousin-german, the weeping birch, some of the finest specimens of which are to be seen on the river Findhorn, at Forres,—is indeed the most graceful of forest trees, though some painters incline to award the palm of beauty to the beech. Stuck in the fireplaces of Highland cottages the branches of the birch breathe a pleasant fragrance through the apartment, its sap being also used as a beverage, both in its natural state and when fermented, and considered a remedy in renal complaints; it is also invaluable in steeping and tanning nets, sails, and cordage; while the wood, when made into herring-barrels, is said to impart a delightful flavour to their contents. It is a tree which has ever been a favourite with the poets. In the petition of Bruar Water to his Grace the Duke of Athole we find the lines,—

“ Let fragrant birks, in woodbines drest,
My craggy cliffs adorn,”—

a petition which, in compliment to Burns, was kindly granted, the rocky banks of Bruar Water, naturally bare, being now covered with wood.

My friend and I found it painful to tear ourselves away from so much beauty, the murmur of the falls, rising and falling with the breeze, seeming to lure us back as we threaded our way up the winding path that leads back to the highway. It is painful to think that before long the

scream of the locomotive will break the peace of this sweet place, alarming the cushat as it "croodles amorously" to its mate in the heart of the wood, and disturbing the digestion of the raven. About half a mile farther on, the slope of the hill is scaled, and the road trends to the west. At the top we had a fine view of the red and rocky shoulders of Ben Wyvis. The birch-wood still keeps us company for another half-mile or more, when the road opens out, and shows patches of cultivation here and there on the slopes; indeed, we were informed by a native that the finest "praties" in Ross-shire are raised here. Away to the right in the valley below creeps the lazy Blackwater, which, flowing out of Loch Garve, wriggles slowly through a series of pools till it reaches the farmhouse above the Falls, when it suddenly plucks up courage, and goes merrily off towards the south.

The village of Garve, distant fourteen miles and a half from Dingwall, now came into view, sleeping quietly at the upper end of the loch of the same name, which, when we passed it, lay like a sheet of molten silver in the foreground. It is indeed a sweet little mountain-girt loch, abounding, I believe, in wild duck and trout; but barren in salmon. In the calm summer morning the hills, woods, and meadows which skirt its shores were beautifully mirrored on its quiet breast. We observed traces of the railway engineers all along the southern bank, their red-tipped stakes crossing and recrossing the highway at more points than one. A drove of west-coast fishermen passed us here on their way to the east, their primitive mode of travelling contrasting strangely with the Saxon one, of whose wonders they were all gabbling in their native tongue, the word "railway," which has but recently been added to the Celtic vocabulary, coming out now and again like a step-bairn among the gutturals. Twenty or thirty of these men, starting perhaps from Applecross or Loch Alsh, hire a cart and horse among them, and walk and ride by turns, seven or eight at a time enjoying the luxury of the vehicle. When the railway is opened this laborious mode of travelling will in all likelihood cease, though (such is the power of habit) I have seen a dozen fishermen arrive at the Muir-of-Ord station, so tired that they threw themselves wholesale on the grass till the train should appear, and when it did come up only half of them taking advantage of it, the others preferring to walk fifteen miles to Inverness on foot to paying eighteenpence of a fare. The reluctant hirpling gait with which the pedestrians resumed their journey showed how hard the struggle must have been between pence and personal comfort.

Garve (in Gaelic, the rough place) is but a small village, most of the smoke-dried huts of which will be run down by the railway. Garve Lodge, at the head of the loch, is the residence of Captain Baring. There is a very good inn, commodious and comfortable, where one might surely persuade himself that he was beyond the reach of the fever and fret of the busy world, the stags' heads and stuffed wild birds that adorn the parlour being suggestive only of hill and loch and moor. I at least had persuaded

myself of the fact, and with my feet to the sputtering fire was about to resign myself to the calm tranquillity of the thought, when the door opened suddenly, and in came a ruddy-faced, wiry little man, brusque yet pleasant in manner, who, after recognizing a gentleman of our party, said quietly, —

“I’ve only run down for a day or two, and I wish I hadn’t come at all, for I expect the Government will be defeated to-night, and I may be needed.”

Garve Inn and the House of Commons! Six hundred miles apart! One in the heart of nature’s ruggedness, the other in the centre of civilization! Quiet peace and political excitement! Highland scenery and the roar of London streets! how strangely brought together! And after all the Government was not defeated; and I often wonder if that Conservative baronet did not regret that he left the sweet tranquillity of his shooting-lodge so hurriedly and to no purpose.

The mail arrives at Garve about eight in the morning, the passengers for Ullapool changing here and taking the road to the right, while the Kyleakin route runs straight west. As the scenery for some miles is rather bare, it will be advisable for the tourist to coach it as far as Kinlochluichart at least, though if he take an interest in squalid huts and miserable little crofts, whose finest chimneys are herring-barrels retired from trade, he may walk on. The distant scenery, however, is good, Ben Wyvis being now left behind, and standing out in the dim distance like an enormous plum pudding burning in the blue flame of brandy; the Fannich hills in front, streaked with snow; the lofty Sgor-a-Vullin and Sgor-an-Iolair, each with head wrapped in snowy nightcap or hid in cloud, which gives the idea of their being rather elderly men among mountains, fond of nightcap and pipe above all things.

While on the mail ourselves on this dreary bit of road, I was surprised and gratified to find in two fellow-passengers a Jamaica clergyman and his wife who chanced, as it turned out in the course of conversation, to have mutual friends with myself at Kingston—in such odd places do people sometimes meet! They, however, were going on by mail all the way, and, as we were loitering and enjoying the road, we had, after two hours’ pleasant talk, to part company with each other. A few miles beyond Garve a beautiful lake, six miles in length, called Loch Luichart (Palace Loch), comes into view on the left, a blue expanse of water, overhung by beetling crags on the west, and on the north skirted by pretty sloping shores, the river Carron flowing into it at that end through a rocky channel. The heavy-browed crags have in all likelihood suggested to the imagination of the Celt the legend, current in this country side, that Fingal and his heroes lie buried under them, whence, at the touch of a magic wand, or at the sound of a Scandinavian war-cry on the wind, they will spring up to renew the feats that have made Ossian’s name a household word; each armed with a spear,—

"To equal which

The tallest pine, hewn on Norwegian hills,
To be the mast of some great ammiral,
Were but a wand."

At Kinlochluichart (Kin being Gaelic for head) there is a handsome shooting-lodge, belonging to Lady Ashburton, which commands a varied view of loch, moor, river, and mountain. Here Sir Edwin Landseer is a frequent guest, and no doubt derives much of his inspiration from the magnificent scenery and the magnificent animals, wild and tame, that are to be seen in the neighbourhood. There is a fine deer forest behind, presently leased by Mr. Thistlethwaite, of London, who also occupies the lodge. His stock of Highland ponies, which were grazing near the house as we passed, are much admired, their sleek coats and plump flanks being unchallengeable testimonials to their owner's kindly care. They are used chiefly in the shooting season, being steady, sure-footed beasts, whose instincts are entirely reliable on dangerous ground. They carry the sportsman to the hills, and in the evening bring home the stalked deer dangling from their flanks and shoulders. In the grounds surrounding the lodge the deer run about in great numbers, crossing and recrossing the highway in dozens, and suggesting to the hungry traveller visions of savoury haunches and smoking pasties, such as the patriarch loved.

"Take, I pray thee," said Isaac to his son—"take thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field and take me some venison."

How different is the modern mode of "taking venison"! The Esau of the present day takes his rifle and his cartridge-box, and brings down a stag, as Mr. Thistlethwaite can do, at the distance of a mile. Very hard sport it is, too, requiring the cunning of a fox, the eye of an eagle, and the humility of a serpent, for "on thy belly must thou go" if thou art to become a mighty hunter of the deer. And all this, too, for a coarse kind of flesh, most of which is sold to the poor of the neighbourhood at three-pence or fourpence a pound!

Of Mrs. Thistlethwaite most Londoners, I dare say, have heard, seeing that she created quite a sensation a summer or two ago in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, where she preached to a large and fashionable audience with much eloquence and effect. She is known also in Ross-shire as "the lady preacher," and at the Spa, on summer sabbath evenings, she is said to thrill the hearts of her hearers by her earnest oratory as much as she fascinates them by the beauty and grace of her person and manner. On her arrival at her Highland home in July last she is reported to have expressed her intention of converting all Ross-shire before she returned to London; but as the missionary records have not published any startling results up to the present time, we may be allowed to infer that the work of evangelization has been harder than she anticipated. The Ross-shire men are, I am afraid, too well "kippered" to the Free Church, and no evangelist of a different persuasion has any chance among them

for twenty years to come. Just beyond Kinlochluichart Lodge the road crosses a brawling stream, on which the tourist may see a pretty waterfall if he have time to turn aside. The trout in the burns hereabouts, especially those of Loch Luichart, are far-famed and delicious, as I can testify, for we slept two nights in a friend's house close by. On the evening of our arrival we had the good fortune to see a noble herd of deer crossing from Mr. Thistlethwaite's forest to Strath Conon, taking the river Conon like Newfoundland dogs, and when we shouted and blew our whistles loud and fast, bounding up the slopes on the other side like Byron's wild gazelle, "with airy step and glorious eye." The wildness of the scenery around, coupled with the unwonted sight, excited a lonely feeling within me, and I cried to myself, "Surely this is the heart of the Highlands, a debatable ground between man and the deer, between civilization and savage life;" but the feeling was soon dispelled when we entered the house and heard a chamber concert in the drawing-room, the voice and piano combined, which, considering that it was non-professional, was positively exquisite, raising our souls up to a new world of beauty and delight far away from the wild mountain grandeur outside.

There is a bridle-path across the hills from Kinlochluichart to Strathconon, over which we had the pleasure and fatigue of walking one day; but the fatigue much outweighed the satisfaction, the road besides being rough and not easily traceable without a guide; the path too was quite alive with adders, which, with the gad-flies and mosquitoes, made the journey rather uncomfortable. About the latter insect there is no doubt, my Jamaica friend having corroborated my previously conceived opinion of their being common in various parts of Scotland. In the evenings they may occasionally be seen within, playing round the flame of the lamp or candle.

About a mile beyond the lodge is the parliamentary church and manse of Kinlochluichart, the latter with its back to the highway, contrary to the injunction of St. Paul, "that bishops should be lovers of hospitality," and belying the genial-hearted character of the incumbent, of whose hospitality I have more than once partaken. The church is, like most other parliamentary churches in the Highlands, a plain, whitewashed building, in shape a cross. Indeed, these churches and manses were all modelled after the same plan, on being planted by Government to bring the tidings of the Gospel within hearing of the remotest glens. The manse is usually a long, one-storied building of very limited accommodation, a few, however, being of two stories. It seemed singular to find the name Conon applied to the stream that flows past Kinlochluichart Manse, while Strathconon runs in quite a different direction, with a stream called the Meig flowing through it. Indeed, the Conon only reaches the Strath that bears its name after working its passage through Loch Luichart. About half a mile beyond the church the highway crosses a brawling mountain stream with precipitous banks, called the Grudie (Gaelic for dreary), which runs a distance of five

miles from Loch Fannich, and which is also noted for its glorious trout; then, with a quick sweep, first to the south and then to the west, it enters Strath Bran through a picturesque gorge filled with native timber—alder, mountain-ash, birch, and oak. This Strath is said to have its name from Bran, a famous deerhound of the Fingalians, which has furnished a name to many localities. On entering this valley a little lochan, mottled with water-lilies and full of large yellow trout, by name Loch Halar, is passed to the left, the full Strath coming also into view, bounded on the south by the beautiful peaks and ridges of Sgor-a-Vullin, and on the north by the long green slopes of Ben Fin (Fingal's Hill) and Ben Eigen (mountain of distress), all dotted with sheep; the whole broad valley looking like the trough of a huge sea, and Sgor-a-Vullin, if flaked with snow, its white-crested waves. In the morning, when the mist is clearing off the summits, and in the evening (I have seen it at both times), when its night-robes are being donned, this view of Sgor-a-Vullin is grand in the extreme. Returning late one evening from Loch Maree, we instinctively bared our heads before it, and raised aloud the glorious old psalm,—

“ I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid,”

realizing the thought of the Psalmist in all its force and devotional beauty.

Should the day be wet, however, the scene is changed, the Strath seeming a blank, dreary wilderness, fit only as the abode of the descendants of Ronald MacEagh, “son of the mist,” familiar to the readers of the “Legend of Montrose.” Resignation is, in such a case, the only consolation, when we remember that the mist is, in its own way, doing useful work; for, in the words of the grim Scotch shepherd in reply to Lord Rutherford, “it wats the sod, it slockens the yowes, and it's God's wull.”

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MILITARY IN PRUSSIA.

BY DR. MICHELSEN.

WASHINGTON IRVING says that "the natural principle of war is to do the most harm to our enemy with the least harm to ourselves." Accepting this maxim to be true, no one can doubt that Prussia, in her recent brilliant victories over Austria and throughout Germany, has wonderfully fulfilled it. Austria, who went into the conflict with the most sanguine assurance of success, and which assurance was universally supported by the great neutral countries, has come out from it painfully shorn of all her military glory and renown, and is completely prostrated at the foot and mercy of Prussia, who has shown herself to be pre-eminently the first military power in the world. This position France at one time assumed to herself; but since the great and decisive achievements of Prussia over Austria she looks upon the former as now her formidable military rival. Long may it be before they measure their strength with each other, "for," as Montesquieu observes, "if Europe should ever be ruined it will be by its warriors." The great triumphs of Prussia have been unmistakably traced to the almost perfect organization of her army. The needle gun may have helped her much, but her chief advantage over her once great rival was to be found in the admirable organization that existed in her army, and especially amongst the officers. And this result is traceable to the peculiar system of military education that obtains in Prussia, her object being to give a good general and professional training to all her officers rather than a specially excellent training to a selected few.

The Prussian Constitution of 1850 says that "all native Prussians are bound to military service, and to the defence of the country, after the completion of their twentieth year of age, while the *extent* and *manner* of that military duty are to be defined by law." From this general obligation naturally accrues the necessity of every one acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the military art to render his services available for the task. A special law prohibits all military substitution, nor does it make any distinction of birth and rank, or exempt from that duty foreigners who are settled and firmly established in Prussia, with the sole exception of ambassadors and royal princes, or those foreigners who are not naturalized in Prussia. On the other hand, the law makes peculiar regulations with regard to qualification, age, and mode of life of the respective individuals, and whether the same belong to the—

1. Standing army;
2. The landwehr (first levy);
3. The landwehr (second levy); or,
4. The landsturm.

The *standing army* forms, as the term implies, the offensive and defen-

sive force permanently established, in all its ramifications, internal and external. In it is chiefly vested the military education and rearing of the people. It comprises military officers and functionaries qualified for the task. It need not be mentioned that individuals of bad and infamous character are excluded from entering the service, either as voluntaries or conscripts. We may assume that, upon an average, 160,000 complete annually in Prussia their twentieth year of age; that half that number go to the conscription, and that only one-fourth are really arrayed under the military standard: while the non-conscripts, or those who are not levied for active service to the standing army, form the ranks of the reserve corps, liable—in case of need—to be mobilized. The term of service for the standing army was originally fixed at three years, after which they were to supply the vacant ranks of the *reserve* corps. But owing to various considerations, economical and social, the term is now limited to two years for those who serve under the *line of infantry*, while it remains as heretofore for those who serve in the infantry guards and the other military lines. To young men who have received a sound college education, and have distinguished themselves in the examination, but who have voluntarily entered the service, the term is limited to only one year; but they are bound to provide arms, uniform, and, in short, clothe and board at their own cost.

In time of peace the standing army consists, upon an average,—

Of infantry	60,000 men.
The other military weapons	30,000
Volunteers	30,000
Officers and officials	18,000

138,000

And, including the reserve corps, the standing army may be increased to 225,000 men.

Next to the standing army ranks the *landwehr* of the first levy. It consists of those who have completed their respective terms of the above service in the ranks of the standing army. The term of service is here fixed at seven years, and to it generally belong all men from their twenty-fifth to thirty-second year of age.

The *landwehr* of the second levy is destined in time of war to garrison the fortresses, and constitutes generally the military police in the interior: the term of its service is also fixed at seven years, or from the thirty-third to the thirty-ninth year of age, after they retire from the service of the first levy.

The men of both levies are usually allowed a furlough of one year in time of peace.

It was the formation of the *landwehr* that rendered it possible for the State to put into the field, in the shortest space of time, an enormous number of well-drilled and disciplined troops.

Estimating the first levy at	147,600 men,
and the second levy at	175,000

Total 322,600 men,

the army in active service may thus easily be increased to about 600,000; but as the second levy is not to be mobilized abroad, there would at all events remain for foreign service upwards of 400,000 soldiers; and if we consider that the male population in Prussia averaging the age of twenty to thirty-two may now be estimated at about 2,000,000, it is evident that though only one-fourth is available for foreign service, there is always a sufficient number in the reserve corps to fill up the ranks thinned by death, illness, wounds, &c., in the standing army.

The *landsturm* forms the last item in the military organization. To it belong all men who have already served or were included in all the previous conscriptions, as also all adults from the age of seventeen to twenty. The *landsturm*, as it does not belong to the army proper, meets only when an invasion is threatened from abroad. In time of peace it possesses no military function whatever, and is only organized at the express command of the sovereign, while its formation is regulated by the local and territorial domiciles of the respective individuals.

All higher promotions, decisions, and appointments must emanate from the monarch, in whom all military power is vested.

Among the educational establishments for the military, the *war school* at Berlin stands prominent; it unites the scientific instruction of the university with the practical mechanism of the army. Next we may mention the schools for the various military weapons, such as the artillery and engineer schools at Berlin, the riding school at Schwedt, and the medical veterinary college at Berlin.

The daily pay of a common soldier in the standing army is about 3½d. in money and a ration of bread, while the cost of his clothing does not exceed upon an annual average 30s. Most of the men live in the barracks, or are billeted on the inhabitants.

Each company in the *infantry* comprises, in time of peace, 130 men, 5 officers, and 1 surgeon; and in time of war 250 men, 5 officers, and 1 surgeon. Each squadron of *cavalry* contains, in time of peace, 146 men (143 horses), 5 officers, and 1 surgeon; and in war 150 men, same number of officers, and 1 surgeon. Each company of *pioneers* contains, in time of peace, 175 men, 4 officers, and 1 surgeon; and in time of war 225 men, 5 officers, and 1 surgeon.

The *artillery* is differently constituted. The strength of the companies, in time of peace, depends on the fact [whether they belong to the *foot* or to the *horse* batteries; while in *war*, whether they belong to the 6-pounder or 12-pounder batteries, to the 7-pounder howitzer batteries, to the horse batteries, or to the fortress companies. A company of a 6-pounder foot battery consists, in time of peace, of 108 men, 4 officers,

and 1 surgeon; and in war of 142 men, 4 officers, and 1 surgeon. A company of a 12-pounder battery consists, in time of peace, of as above; and in war of 119 men, 3 officers, and 1 surgeon. Those of the 7-pounder howitzers have, in time of peace, same as above; and in war 175 men, 4 officers, and 1 surgeon. Companies of the horse batteries have, in peace, 88 men, 4 officers, and 1 surgeon; and in war 150 men, 4 officers, and 1 surgeon. Those destined for the fortresses have, in time of peace, the same number as those of the 6-pounder foot batteries; and in war 150 men, 3 officers, and 1 surgeon.

An infantry *regiment* in the *standing army* consists of 3 battalions.

A cavalry regiment consists of 4 squadrons.

An artillery regiment of 16 companies in 3 sections.

At the head of a regiment stands a *staff officer*; his staff consists of an *aide-de-camp*, an accountant, and some other inferior officers. In him is vested the power of *inferior* promotions, the movements of the several companies, consent of marriages of the men, &c.

The various regiments bear the respective numbers from 1 to 40, according to the age of their existence.

Two regiments form a brigade, headed by the respective colonels or major-generals.

A division consists of 1 brigade infantry, 1 brigade of cavalry, and 1 of landwehr. At the head of a *division* stands the major-general or lieutenant-general.

An *army corps* comprises 2 divisions, or 29 battalions of infantry, 29 squadrons of cavalry, and 1 artillery regiment with 96 cannons, and 1 section of pioneers. The total force of a *corps*, in time of peace, amounts (without the landwehr) to the round number of 14,000 men and 3,000 horses, a force that may be increased fourfold in time of war, including the *landwehr* of the first levy. There exist in all, 9 such *corps*, one of which is the *guard corps*, while the others bear the respective numbers of 1 to 8.

The maintenance of a soldier costs upon an average 180 thalers (£27) annually, and computing the total population of Prussia at 17,000,000, there would come per head a small fraction of a farthing.

"OUT OF CHARITY."

CHAPTER XI.

WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS.

OUT of Carnarvonshire and into Cambridgeshire involves (pretty nearly) a stride across England, and as great a change of landscape as, while within the four seas, you would find it possible to compass. Instead of towering mountains, purple with heather blossom, you will have (for recollect we are in August) flat shelves of country now yellow in their time of maturity. We have left the hills, where none but bees and botanists find harvest, for the flats, in which the choicest of the wheat of England is yearly ripened for the sickle. There was a time, not quite beyond the remembrance of living men, when the swamps of the east were still more desolate than the hills of the west of our island. But French wars, and hundred-shilling corn-prices, and inclosure Acts, and engineering, have made the wilderness a fruitful field, and filled the hungry with good things.

Nowhere (you may take the *Clergy List* and look out the figures for yourself)—nowhere throughout England (unless it may be in carboniferous Durham) are more abundant riches poured upon the Church in the persons of her rectors and her vicars.

Nowhere will you so frequently find four figures demanded to express the annual income of her benefices. For example, there is the living of Bestworth. As it stands at the value of £1,900 a year, we may conclude its rector's actual receipts to have been about £1,400. Bestworth was but a village. It did not lay on an entire flat, but sloping gently westward. On the crown of the slope, and very near together, stood the church and the rectory-house. Of the church it does not fall within our province to speak. Of the rectory we may just say that it was at once as ugly and as comfortable a house as any you would find throughout broad England. It was built of a greyish stone, and it made you button your coat more closely only to look at it.

But there was consolation inside. And for the gardens—for flowers, fruits, and vegetables,—fancy (on a moderate scale for size) the most perfectly arranged establishment it was ever your privilege to behold.

It is the best possible time of the year for seeing Bestworth to advantage. Those fields below, now smiling on the scythe, look black and bleak indeed for many months of the year.

The sunsets of Cambridgeshire, it should be known, have something to say for themselves. Standing in that rectory garden, or from any spot that commands an outlook westward, you may behold the dank vapours

transfigured as the sun goes down, and shining with such tints as the flower-beds of Eden can hardly ever have known. It is seven o'clock, and (as the day is the 14th of August) the sun is just about bidding the world good night, when we present ourselves at the rectory door. We find in the drawing-room a group of persons, awaiting, not the sunset, but their dinner.

The rector of Bestworth is the Reverend Henry Leyburn. He is the nephew of Mr. Owen Gryffyth, who on this very day has been borne to his grave amongst the Welsh hills. Mr. Leyburn is quite unaware of this, quite unaware of his uncle's death; or there had been no dinner-party at his house that day. We have already described him as a lucky and successful man. Though his good fortune contributed indirectly to much of our story, the manner and cause of it are not so strictly our proper concern. However, a story of success is seldom dull in British ears, and we will so far digress as to give it.

Undowered with money, unsupported by friends, ungifted with striking abilities, Henry Leyburn, in or about the year 1832, had fallen upon a curacy in the near neighbourhood of the cathedral city of Isly. His gentlemanly manners attracted the favourable notice of one of the cathedral dignitaries, and through that friend's good word Henry Leyburn received an invitation to the palace. The Right Reverend Theophilus Rumicles, then the Bishop of Isly, had one unwedded daughter; and with that daughter, after dinner, Mr. Leyburn was invited to play at chess. He won the game and his adversary at once. He got no more palace dinners, but his curacy was near at hand, and he and Miss Rumicles had ample opportunities for strengthening and renewing the bond between them.

Then came discovery, discouragement, and opposition. The bishop would not hear of such a marriage. Mrs. Rumicles was the angrier of the two. His lordship had sprung from no aristocratic stock himself. But his lady numbered a duke among her cousins, and her sister was the Honourable Mrs. Somerby. The bishop would not have objected to buy off Mr. Leyburn with some piece of preferment at a suitable distance; but the curate encouraged no such negotiation.

Miss Rumicles was of age by some years, but she made no rash use of her legal enfranchisement; and the prevailing idea was that nothing would come of the attachment after all.

It might be about three or four months from that fatal game of chess that Mrs. Rumicles entered, one forenoon, into the bishop's library, took a chair without any excuse or apology, and broke ground in these words:—

"Bishop, I'll tell you what. Poor Louisa looks very unhappy. Really I don't like to see her so."

"Hm! So, then, you're thinking it would be well to let her have her own way? I thought we were entirely agreed about it?"

"Why, yes, Bishop; but did you observe what sort of a breakfast the poor thing made this morning? Only just the least bit of dry toast! And so it has been for the last three or four mornings."

The bishop was really touched. He had a kind heart and a good appetite. The bishop was doubly affected.

"Well, my dear; I've got a great deal to do this morning. About poor Louisa—I really don't know what to say. Of course, poor child, I shouldn't like to stand in the way of her happiness. If you think she seems to have set her heart upon it—"

"I really think she is truly attached to him. And after all, why, you know we have nothing to say against the young man in himself."

"No, no, Maria, of course not. But I thought you were at least as much against it as I was."

"Oh, certainly. But what would be the use of thwarting the poor thing? She might be ill: and I must say—though I wish to goodness it had never happened—that she has shown a very proper spirit; never given way to any undutiful feelings about it."

"Louisa's a good girl, a very good girl. Well—well—let her please herself. Only make her quite understand that she, and nobody else, is answerable for it. But there's one other thing. Of course I could not consent to this young—what's-his-name—Leyburn—marrying her until he has a home to give her. And I doubt if he can do that at present—if ever."

"Well,—why, Bishop, I suppose, if you give your consent, they would be looking to you for that. Couldn't you find something for them? They need not marry until you can."

"Dear, dear! However, I've given my consent; and I'll do what I can. You may ask him here to dinner to-morrow."

Which was done. And consent was given to the marriage of Henry Leyburn and Louisa Rumicles. As the patronage attached to the see of Isly is ample both in quantity and quality, the condition that they should not marry until the curate obtained a benefice, was not a very hard or discouraging one.

It was not long before Henry Leyburn, now vicar of Goodby, bore away Louisa from her father's palace to the vicarage that father had bestowed upon him. There they abode not long. It was in the rectory of Betterworth that their earliest baby drew its earliest breath. And before that child knew his right hand from his left, his parents were installed in the yet more attractive living of Bestworth. Moreover, Henry Leyburn had become a canon of Isly Cathedral. The bishop, who had so tardily consented to the marriage, now mended all by doing much and saying little. Yet those who best knew his mind were aware that he was getting more and more to admire that son-in-law whom it had once been an effort to endure. His remarks, from the wedding day to his own dying day, were very sparse and short. But they noted the changes within:—"Louisa

might have done better ;"—" Louisa might have done worse ;"—" Louisa might have done a great deal worse "

A smacking sum of money fell in when Theophilus, Lord Bishop of Isly, retired to his rest in the cathedral vaults. Mrs. Bumicks was there already before him. So of course the Leyburns were very well off indeed.

The living of Bestworth we have already set down as a clear £1,400 a year. Then the canonry, which had no drawbacks, was £800 more, and I understand that £20,000 came in when the bishop died. So their income fell not very short of three thousand a year. On this they lived freely and yet carefully. The medium which Leyburn kept in his expenditure he maintained in all his other concerns.

There was not a "safer" man in all the diocese ; and he might, had he so desired, have been returned to Convocation by a vote almost unanimous. He was never at the head of any movement, and never quite at the tail of it. As a magistrate (for he sat on the bench), he never made a blunder at any time. As a priest, he never came once under suspicion of holding "strange views."

And as golden was the mean of his domestic life. As a husband, he was neither a tyrant nor a spoony. As a father, his children were not afraid of him and not too familiar with him. If any slept under his sermons,—why, you know, Saint Paul could not keep *all* his hearers always awake. And Henry Leyburn's discourses were at least as "sound" as the slumbers which went on in spite of them. And all allowed that Bestworth—just like Louisa—"might have done a great deal worse."

Moderate views, moderate desires, moderate expenses, moderate affections ; this was Henry Leyburn's composition. He had so much of the Englishman and so little of the Welshman, that I cannot marvel at the estrangement existing between him and his mother's brother, Mr. Owen Gryffyth.

It was in the drawing-room of this respectable and prosperous man that we find ourselves about the hour of sunset on the 14th day of August. At that very hour, Eva, stupefied and dismayed at the fearful position in which Mr. Gryffyth's misdirected benevolence had placed her, was welcoming the shadows of night, which might separate herself and her troubles for a time. Thus, unknown to us beforehand, are the fates of others interwoven strangely with our own.

The party at Bestworth were, as I said, awaiting their dinner ; and only one of the guests remained absent. We need not enumerate all who were present. There was Mr. Smatterby, the curate : he was an Oxford man. Bestworth was distant from Cambridge not many miles, and Mr. Leyburn eschewed Cambridge curates, for the same reasons for which ladies eschew servants likely to have followers. Mr. Smatterby was arrayed in M. B. coat and cassock waistcoat. Not so his rector. (No, thank you ! No such new-fangled eccentricities for Henry Leyburn.) There were Mr. and Mrs.

Fillip, of the neighbouring parish of Squantley, and a few more, the whole dinner party numbering twelve. Before they had waited long, the sound of gig wheels proclaimed that the term of endurance was ended. Mrs. Leyburn rang for the dinner to be served, and in a minute more the servant had ushered in and announced the lingering guest by name as "Mr. Dykhart."

We have met him before. We saw him at the sale in Gravelling Castle, purchasing the portrait known to be that of Miss Somerby. He and Henry Leyburn were old friends. A long absence from England on Mr. Dykhart's side, had interrupted their intercourse, but not estranged them. John Dykhart's way to preferment had been no such short and easy one as that which had been vouchsafed to his friend. Not that he could be called a very unlucky man. In early life he had acted as tutor and chaplain in the family of more than one nobleman. Afterwards, and for many years of his life, he had held a chaplaincy at the Cape of Good Hope. At last, and in about the forty-fifth year of his age, the living of Croxton, in Cambridgeshire, disengaged by the death of old Mr. Poakham, had been bestowed on Mr. Dykhart. And happy did he feel in the prospect of a home and a sphere in the near neighbourhood of his old university, and in constant intercourse with the Leyburns. He was married, but had never had any children. He had been inducted into his living but a few months ago; which accounts for his name not appearing, as vicar of Croxton, in the *Clergy List* of 1856.

There was some apologizing on his part, and some never-minding on the part of his friends, when he came in, burdened with the guilt of being a little late. And then they all moved in to dinner—to as good a dinner in all essentials (I do believe), as, at that hour, the world saw. There were grouse, of course among the earliest victims of the season. But we anticipate too much. While the salmon was yet on the table, a conversation began, which greatly interested Mr. Dykhart, and may have its interest for us.

"Well, Dykhart," said Mr. Leyburn, setting down his glass of iced hock, "this, I hope, is only the first of a long series. You have a long arrear of absence to make up. But are we not to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Dykhart?"

"Why, I am afraid not. She is such an invalid, feels any fatigue so much. But that will be no hindrance to your coming to Croxton."

Mrs. Leyburn gave some assurance of a speedy visit, and asked Mr. Dykhart whether he did not find many changes after so long an absence from England."

"It has been my lot," he said, "my painful lot, to see one very melancholy change indeed;—Leyburn, you know I once lived at Gravelling. About a month ago I was present at the sale there."

"Ah, indeed! Yes, really, one almost looks upon it as a national calamity. Did you purchase anything at the sale?"

"Yes, I did. I dare say you know that poor Lord Fitzadam was

engaged to a Miss Somerby. She died young. Her portrait was there still—a marvellous likeness. I thought it would be a pleasure to poor Fitzadam to have it, and I bought it. It was not much."

"Indeed! You know that Miss Somerby was Mrs. Leyburn's cousin? I never saw her myself."

"I beg your pardon. I remember now, to be sure."

"Have you sent the picture away?" Mrs. Leyburn inquired.

"No, Mrs. Leyburn. It is at Croxton still. You must give me the pleasure of showing it you. Lord Fitzadam is at Baden, and I understand he is as broken in health as in fortune. It is a melancholy end for such a family as they were once. A friend, who goes to Baden in September, is going to take charge of it for me. And, by the way, Mrs. Leyburn (you know I saw a great deal of them when I was tutor to the young Gardeners), where now is your other cousin, the Miss Somerby who married Herbert Campion? I have often asked, and nobody could tell me."

Mr. Leyburn asked his friend to take another glass of hock; and Mrs. Leyburn demanded, on her own account, the lobster sauce.

Mr. Dykhart was made aware that he had put his foot into one of those conversational private grounds which encompass nearly every family that exists. Of course he was silent.

Mr. Leyburn turned the matter off by asking some question as to the Earl of Horticult's family.

Mr. Smatterby was well up in heraldry. Mr. Smatterby considered that the Gardeners had pretensions to be the oldest of all extant families. They sprang from the Gardeners of Castle Eden. They bore a cherub's head for crest, and three flaming swords constituted their arms. And their motto was "Non Sua Poma."

Then the conversation went off, or rather was turned off, to Mr. Dykhart's parish and his new duties.

Mrs. Leyburn said that she believed old Mr. Poakham, who had held the living forty years, had left nearly everything for his successor to do.

"Yes," Mr. Dykhart answered, "it was a sad thing for the parish, indeed."

"They say he drank," Mr. Phillip observed.

"I fear there is no doubt of that," answered the new vicar of Croxton; "and, what is worse, it scarcely seems to have shocked the people, so accustomed they were to it. My old clerk was telling me only this morning, that he has seen Mr. Poakham 'overcome' at a funeral several times."

"Ah, really?" said Mrs. Phillip. Really, indeed, poor man? Overcome? A man of a very kind feeling heart, I dare say, notwithstanding his serious failing?"

"I am sorry to say, Mrs. Phillip, it was his *failing*, and not his *feeling*, which overcame him at such times."

“Oh dear, to be sure, I didn't quite understand you! I see what you mean now. Law! how very shocking!”

From one topic to another the discourse halted on, until dinner gave place to the dessert. Dessert at Bestworth, at the latter end of summer, was as good as a fruit show. A great deal better, indeed, unless you took no pleasure in fruit, save that which entered by the eye. There were set out on this day peaches and nectarines, those Esaus and Jacobs of the wall-fruit tribe; apricots, indicating with their sunshiny colour what is surely their rightful etymology; pears, any one of which you could hardly hold on the palm of your hand; a melon, which (in the cutting of it) would have been quite a lesson for any medical student; grapes, to be cut off the dwarf tree, which stood in a vase on the table; and strawberries, a mouthful every one. For the Bestworth gardener understood retarding as well as forcing, and could prolong the summer into the autumn, as well as anticipate it in the spring.

The ladies retired, and the gentlemen sat alone. Mr. Leyburn thought his friend Dykhart a little abstracted and absent-minded. He was so in truth. He could not get out of his head the abrupt and significant manner in which his inquiry after Mrs. Campion, once Miss Somerby, had been evaded by his friends. What dark disgrace had overshadowed her? Clearly, for some cause or other, her kindred were now unwilling to hear her name. Not to cause any mistake, we may say at once that Mr. Dykhart had never been, either openly or secretly, the lover of Adela Campion. But the families of Gardener and Somerby had been near neighbours and intimate friends; and, as you have learnt already, only the premature death of Mrs. Campion's younger sister had hindered a close alliance between them. Mr. Dykhart well remembered those two sisters. Although he could never dispute the general verdict, which assigned the larger share of beauty to Julia, the younger sister, yet he always thought Adela the more winning of the two. Of all the women he had ever known, she was the least likely to have forgotten that thing which, unremembered, leaves womanhood a despicable wreck. He could not believe in the horrid thing which the ominous silence, when her name had been recalled by him, did certainly appear to suggest. He would have made no small sacrifice to know something more. But it was not for him to abuse an old friend's privilege, or to peer into matters designedly locked away from him.

When the gentlemen were summoned into the drawing-room, Mr. Dykhart had occasion to detain his friend Leyburn on a matter of clerical business. It took but a very few minutes. And (at first to Dykhart's immense relief) his reverend brother, of his own accord, brought up that topic which, at dinner, he had so summarily set aside.

“Dykhart, you were asking after my wife's cousin, Mrs. Campion. You never heard any rumour of the—the affair?”

“No, indeed, none. And I am utterly without any idea of its nature,

or I should never have mentioned her name. I am afraid I inadvertently said something which pained you."

"No, no; not at all. I have not the slightest objection to talk of it with an old friend like yourself. But you see, just then there were other people at table. Mrs. Phillip, for instance, is a very worthy woman in her way; but such a talker, that I didn't wish her curiosity to be excited. Well, the fact is that Herbert Campion and his wife have been separated for these last—let me see—fourteen years. He lives abroad, and comes home very seldom. She, I suppose, never. There was no open scandal, no exposure. Only we heard that his father was dead, and that he was coming back to England (you know he was in the diplomatic service abroad), to take possession of his property. And then the next thing we heard was that he was likely to live abroad altogether; that he had given (virtually) the estate to his brother, his younger brother, Gerald; and that (we were never informed of any particulars) there had been a dreadful discovery of some sort, and that he and his wife were parted altogether."

"But can it be possible that she ever gave him any just cause for it? I *cannot* believe it. Adela Somerby! The unlikeliest young woman I think I ever knew. You say you were never told particulars?"

"No; and of course, as relations, we should like to think the best. But Mrs. Campion has made no appeal to her friends. She shrank out of sight, without one effort to vindicate herself. It looked terribly like a confession of guilt, her doing so."

"I cannot think it true. But I must admit that the defence would be a difficult one. Had they any children?"

"Only one, a daughter."

"And who has taken her?"

"Her mother. So Mr. Gerald Campion once told me. That one thing, you see, appears to put the whole story in the worst light. Gerald Campion (I now and then meet him in London) seemed very unwilling to enter on the matter. So of course I never asked any more particulars."

"But you don't doubt the truth of what he told you?"

"Oh no. He's a weak man, but a most entirely honourable one. He was always much more in his father's favour than the elder brother, Herbert; and, as he lived in England while his brother lived abroad, I do believe, if he had been a designing man, he might have got his father to disinherit Herbert in his favour. I know that many expected old Mr. Campion to do some such thing. He was so very bitter against his elder son's marriage."

"On what grounds?"

"She had little or no fortune; and there had been some sort of quarrel between the families. However, the estate came to Herbert all right enough. But he only got it to transfer it to his brother."

"Did he give it altogether to his brother?"

"No. I never understood that. I believe it is *his* as much as ever. Only his brother lives at the Hall, and to all intents and purposes is master and owner. And as Herbert has evidently disowned his wife's child, of course his brother will be his heir. He, too, happens to have an only daughter. It's a distressing story, and that is all I know about it. I cannot say that either my wife or I are at all desirous of knowing more. —Well, shall we go into the drawing-room?"

They went. But Mr. Dykhart carried therein the matter which had begun to perplex him in the dining-room. What Mr. Leyburn had told him tended rather to thicken than to explain the hateful mystery presented to him. But that it would ever be less dark than at present was no very probable thing. What was hidden from the lady's own relatives was not very likely spontaneously to reveal itself to him,—a distant friend of by-gone times. Nor could he claim the remotest right to probe it for his own satisfaction.

He would have pleased his host and hostess by remaining at Bestworth all night. But he was anxious to get forward with the labours he was now inaugurating at Croxton. Besides, his invalid wife was awaiting him there. So at no very backward hour he was in his gig again, and driving away to his vicarage in the sultry August night.

Croxton Vicarage was a much smaller, older-fashioned house than Bestworth Rectory. Yet many people would have thought the former much the more attractive abode. Outside it had most certainly the advantage. Its front was one unbroken mass of green (of course, except at the windows); and it nestled in a ring of evergreens encircling a flower-garden.

The Reverend Jonathan Poakham had not cared much for flowers. But the womanly taste of Mrs. Dykhart, though but in the very first month of occupation, was manifest already in that garden. And all were aware of the more important reforms with which Croxton was now to be flooded by Mr. Dykhart himself. All felt, with very varying degrees of satisfaction, that the long dark night of Poakhamism was over, and that with the new vicar had come upon Croxton a new era. Mr. Dykhart, returning home to that village from Bestworth, felt no disposition to envy his richer friend that splendid rectory and that spacious garden. He could have wished his wife to be strong. He could have desired to have children—his and hers—about him. But he had knocked enough about the world to value the retreat at length provided for him. His means were good. He looked forward (as he reasonably might) to a prolonged course of useful labour,—labour not the less pleasant because it must be retired and obscure. And altogether Mr. Dykhart was a very happy man. His wife took an eager interest in the work, which, from her infirmity, she could not very actively share. And on the next day (Friday) our friend was roaming from house to house, making acquaintance with such of his people as were still personally unknown to him. But ever, as he passed

from door to door, he thought of the matter on which he and Leyburn had been conversing, and smiled at his own perversity as he thought of it. As if a little village in Cambridgeshire were likely to contribute relief to such curiosity as this! But far away as his conjectures were from the mark, his feet were already on the road to discovery; and one advance (a very, very painful one to him) was to be taken by him ere he sat again in his own home.

He had occupied the morning with a single row of cottages; for he did not approve of bouncing in and out with a few cut and dry questions on his lips. And it wanted still half an hour to his early dinner. A little down a lane stood a detached cottage. And with this one visit more he thought he might complete his morning. He already knew this cottage to be the abiding-place of more than ordinary affliction.

It sheltered old Mrs. Elwood and her son. And that son, now between forty and fifty years of age, had lain for the latter half of his life (or for nearly as much) in a doubly helpless condition—crippled in body and feeble in mind. An accident with the waggon he had been employed in driving was understood to be the cause of all. Mr. Dykhart went his way to this house,—a house of mourning ever, in whatsoever houses feasting might abound.

Exactly opposite the cottage was a corn-field, and persons were in it gathering the harvest. Nearest to the lane of all the workers was an elderly woman. She was not too busy to take especial note of the appearance and manner of the new parson. For the charm of novelty was bright and glistening still on our friend. And the said harvester observed, as Mr. Dykhart knocked at the cottage door, how active and lively were his movements, and what a spirit he seemed likely to put into his work. The same woman, from almost the same place, also noticed how depressed and miserable was Mr. Dykhart's air when, twenty minutes later, he quitted the cottage and walked back towards his home.

What had happened? Was Mr. Dykhart saddened by the spectacle that cottage held? Any way he must have heard of it before. It could scarcely have been a surprise to him. Our harvesting friend could read a face much better than she could read a book, and she thought that the vicar's countenance expressed remorse instead of sympathy. Sarah Steeper (such was her name) was reminded of a detected thief she had once beheld in the hands of the police. She was angry with her own irreverent memory. But the thought had come before she could forbid its coming. And she wondered very greatly. She had seen Mrs. Elwood show her visitor out at the door. She had caught her parting words, and they had been but those of sincere though commonplace gratitude. Other inmate, beside the imbecile man, there was not one. Yet Mr. Dykhart looked very much like a person on whom reproaches have been poured, and who cannot repel them. Sarah Steeper took advantage of the very first moment the labours of the field would spare her, and crossed over to

see old Mrs. Elwood. There was no anodyne for hungry curiosity there. Mrs. Elwood had plenty to say about the new vicar, and that was altogether in his favour. He had talked so kindly. He had been so pitiful towards poor helpless Issachar. He had bestowed on Mrs. Elwood a monetary gift beyond all expectation, but which she did not call in the aid of arithmetic to define. He had hinted, not vaguely, that his visit would be the earnest of a patronage both large and lasting. *She* had beheld nothing strange in the vicar's demeanour. If Sarah Steeper thought she saw anything funny about him, she could only wish that such funny people abounded in the world. Mr. Dykhart, so puzzled by the mystery which enshrouded Mrs. Campion, had (to one solitary parishioner) become a puzzle in his turn. It might not very greatly have astonished him to know it. But how would he have wondered, if told that Providence was about weaving the two so different mysteries into one,—making, through the latter, the way to a discovery of the former!

He walked away through the village with the slow gait and pre-occupied air which had provoked so much feminine curiosity already. It was now the general dinner-hour of Croxton, and few or none of his people encountered him by the way. So Sarah Steeper could never find a creature to sympathize with her in such curiosity; and, as far as depended on her, the affair had no sequel whatever. The vicar went home to his vicarage. As he opened the garden gate he said aloud (but here was nobody to hear him), "Shall I tell it to her? No, poor thing! I am bound to spare her all the sorrow I can."

And when he entered the house he only said that he was somewhat tired with his morning's work, and that the poverty noticeable here and there was very bitter and disheartening to behold.

Against what his wife had understood as his intentions, he remained in the house that afternoon, instead of starting on a second series of parochial visits. She might, perhaps, have suspected some undeclared cause of annoyance, only that afternoon was varied by the coming of a visitor. That visitor was Mrs. Leyburn. She had come not only to call upon Mrs. Dykhart, but likewise to have a look at the picture of Miss Somerby, which Mr. Dykhart had obtained from Graveling Castle. Mrs. Leyburn proposed in a very few days to quit her home on a visit into Yorkshire; and ere she returned, the picture would probably have started on its way to Germany. Mrs. Leyburn saw the picture, pronounced it to be a wonderful likeness; took an early tea with the Dykharts, a feat by no means incompatible with her arriving at home in time for her own dinner; had some talk with the vicar as to neighbours, clerical and lay; threw out some hints whom it were well to cherish, whom it were well to keep at some distance; and commended to Mrs. Dykhart's patronage such tradesmen as had proved themselves worthy of her own. And the vicar had regained his outward composure, if not his inward peace of mind, ere the visit came to an end.

On the morning of Saturday he mounted his horse and rode over to Bestworth, to have an interview with his friend Leyburn.

When the rector of Bestworth saw Dykhart from his study-window, he was meditating with some intensity over a paper which lay before him. That paper was not the manuscript of the morrow's intended sermon. It was no manuscript whatever. It was a newspaper, sent him by a hand unknown to him that morning. It was called the *Carnarvon Conservative*, and in it (marked out for observation by a pen-stroke) was recorded the death of "Owen Tudor Gryffyth, of Tremallyoc, Tyn-y-cwrw, and Llan-badder," on Saturday, the ninth of the current month.

So his uncle was gone. They had never been reconciled in this life; and their estrangement, be it reckoned a good or an evil thing, was now among those things which are fixed and can in no wise be reversed. Mr. Leyburn was affected by the news. And I can honestly say for him that the now certain loss of his uncle's fortune, if it was not quite absent from his thoughts, held but a subordinate place in them. He was sorry that his nearest relation should have died estranged in heart from himself. That kinsman's feeling towards him we fully know already. Fear lest his advances might be met with disdainful coldness had alone restrained Mr. Gryffyth from inviting his nephew to his affection and inheritance. A similar fear had hindered Henry Leyburn from seeking such reunion on his own behalf. The merest accident might have broken away the barrier which was hateful to both of them. One mutual acquaintance, not too good at keeping a secret, would have done it all, and for ever. But the happy accident had never come to pass. Henry Leyburn had settled himself in a county very distant from Wales, and had secured his fortunes by marrying the daughter of his bishop. Owen Gryffyth was a Dissenter. Moreover, the strongest point in his dissent was his distaste for the order of bishops. Henry Leyburn would have liked to take his wife into Wales and show her that he had connections worth knowing, as soon as they were married. But who could tell how such an uncle would be digested by his father-in-law—the prelate whose consent had been so reluctantly given, and on whose future favour so much was depending? To have lost the preferment sure to come from his Episcopal father-in-law, for the chance of the property which *might* come from his Dissenting uncle, would be a blunder, which Leyburn of all men was very little likely to commit. Perhaps, when he stood in a more independent position he might indulge his family feelings. And besides, he should then be able to court his uncle under less suspicion of sordid motives. Time went on, and redeemed its promise to the full. His preferment had made him a rich man. His uncle could scarcely be very much richer. But still he shrank from taking such a step. There was something cowardly and unworthy in using his prosperity to the possible annoyance of the man who had bestowed it all. Let it rest while the bishop was alive. When he should be gone there would be no conflicting claims to perplex at all. That

change also came to pass. But Leyburn's attitude did not alter. Now, indeed, he considered that it would be resented as a mean thing to seek the kinsman whom, as long he might have lost by owning him, he had continued practically to disown. Yet the rector of Bestworth never entirely gave up the idea to the last. His thoughts about it were not quite selfish, nor were they quite disinterested. He did desire his uncle's friendship for its own sake. Very often he half planned out a family excursion into Wales, in which in all his prosperity he might burst on Tremallyoc and its squire. But he also thought of that squire's lands. It was a drawback to his great success that he owned it so utterly and exclusively to his marriage. Mrs. Leyburn, an excellent wife, had never said one word which implied her own recollection of it. And he, a sensible man, never worried himself with matters of sentiment. Still, it would be a very pleasant thing, he did feel, for his wife to be in turn enriched through him. She should have Tremallyoc House for her own, if it ever became his. It should be her own, to do as she liked with, in his lifetime and after his death. It would be a thing on which the good old bishop might look down and smile.

But now, since old Mr. Gryffyth had been dead six days, and Mr. Leyburn had only learnt it from a newspaper, it was but too clear that he had not made his nephew his heir. They must go into mourning; and Mrs. Leyburn ought perhaps to defer her intended visit into Yorkshire. But all beneficial interest in the event he must clearly make up his mind to forego.

This is a great deal about a family matter. But had either Owen Gryffyth or Henry Leyburn possessed one drop or two less of pride, the history of Eva, which it is our province to record, would have been a different one altogether.

Mr. Dykhart, on arriving at Bestworth, was shown at once into the study of his friend.

“I must ask your pardon for troubling you to-day,” were almost his very first words.

“Dear me! How on earth did *you* hear of it? I had no idea of it until this paper reached me.”

“Heard what? What has happened? I only meant its being Saturday, you know.”

“Oh! I really didn't understand you. The fact is, I've just seen the death of my poor old uncle in Wales. But don't let that drive you away. Poor man! we had no intercourse for several years; and therefore it is not exactly to me as the death of a near relation might ordinarily be. Sit down, I'm always glad to see you any day.”

“Thank you. I come to you in what I may call great trouble of mind; but I thought it possible you could give me some advice about it.”

“Of course I will if I can. I am very sorry to hear what you say. Mrs. Dykhart is not worse, is she?”

"No, she is as well as usual. You can well understand that, weak as her health is, I do not like inflicting any of my worries on her. And what is troubling me now causes me more unhappiness and anxiety than I could ever have thought possible to me. I won't ask you to keep the matter a secret, for I am very well assured you will do so;—unless, indeed, you should think it a *duty* to make the matter known."

"That is not at all likely."

"Well, I'll tell you the matter from its beginning. I don't think you yourself were at Cambridge in the November of 1831."

"November, 1831? Let me see;—no, I left in the February of that year."

"Very well. At all events, I know you were not with me on the particular evening to which I am going to refer. It was a Saturday, and I think the 19th of that month,—November, as I said. Of course you very well remember the rows between Town and Gown, which every now and then were breaking out at Cambridge. Just at the time I speak of they were rather more frequent than usual. The whole country was in a ferment upon the Reform question; and it was likely enough to stir up latent animosities everywhere. Well, on that evening to which I just now alluded, I, with one or two other men, got into an affray on Market Hill. (You know Saturday is the market day at Cambridge.) Our quarrel was with some countrymen, who were then just starting home. Whether we or they were the most to blame I cannot now say. Perhaps I could not have told so at the time. Who ever *can* tell, under such circumstances, which side has the greater fault? I am only concerned with the dreadful consequences. My special antagonist was a young carter: I was too strong for him, and I knocked him down. I recollect his falling against the cart. Then there was a general scuffle. His own friends picked him up, and I never saw nor heard any more of him; and, reasonably enough, I concluded that no positive harm had befallen him: and the affair had all but gone out of my mind. Only yesterday I was visiting up and down my parish, and I was told of an old woman (Elwood her name is) who lived in a cottage with her son who was crippled and imbecile, owing to an accident many years ago with the cart he was driving. I called in at that house; and you, of course, already anticipate what I heard. Poor old Mrs. Elwood informed me that her son's affliction was really the result of his being knocked against his cart by a gownsman at Cambridge, one Saturday night, nearly five-and-twenty years ago. You may fancy what my feelings were and are now."

"Excuse me, Dykhardt, but she may have taken you in. Why did the matter never reach your ears at the time?"

"She accounted very reasonably for that. The poor fellow was with an older man, in service with the same farmer as himself; and that man was afraid of telling the truth. He might have been able to clear himself from blame as to the row, but he could not so well have excused himself for

remaining in Cambridge two hours beyond his proper time. As it was, he made young Elwood's accident account for the delay. Still, the truth was not very long in coming out. But the mother, fancying that the poor boy would meet with less pity if it were known that a quarrel had caused the misery, did not care to correct the false impression where it had got to be received. And it would not have been a very hopeful effort to try and discover who had done the injury. Poor old woman! She was afraid, yesterday, that I should blame her for suppressing so much of the truth, and tried to excuse herself. You may imagine the shame I was feeling all the while."

"You did not make any confession to her?"

"I did not. I could not. Do you think it would be my duty to do so?"

"By no means. Certainly not. What good could come of it? After all—I beg the poor woman's pardon if I wrong her, but it's not impossible you may be the victim of a hoax. She knew, of course, that you had been at Cambridge in your time. She guessed that you had possibly had affrays with townsmen (she lives near enough to Cambridge to have heard of such things), she saw how interested you were about her son, and she took it into her head to try and make you believe it your doing. Her motives I need not indicate."

"I am sure you do wrong her. There was too much coincidence of time, place, and circumstance. When that man, who was with poor Elwood, had left the service he held at the time, he told her all pretty frankly, having no longer any fears for himself. I am only too well assured that this poor man owes all his affliction to me."

"Well, Dykhart, it's a very sad thing, a most deplorable thing. But I think you reproach yourself too much about it. You never *wished* to injure the poor creature."

"No, indeed. And I do not think I can be said to have committed an unprovoked assault. But granting the whole blame to have been his, it is very little less dreadful. Five-and-twenty years of mental and bodily imbecility,—such penalty would exceed the offence of the most lawless ruffian that ever was."

"Well, well, Dykhart, when all is said it was an accident—a most unhappy accident. Hundreds of people are knocked down, and come to no such mischief as this. You must think of it as of an accident."

"So I think I should,—but that it will always be before me. When the poor woman was telling me of all the misery it had entailed on her—making one who might have sustained her a source of double toil and care to her,—I really felt as if I could never find happiness in my ministry at Croxton at all. But you do not think I should be right in giving out the truth?"

"You would be very wrong. If you do, I shall never think it worth my while advising you again. You would injure yourself with the people

there; and to do fresh mischief is not the way to remedy an old mischief."

"Well, I must believe that you are right. Take what course I may, the matter will never cease to be a painful one. You may perhaps be able to assist me in another way. Poor old Mrs. Elwood was telling me of some asylum for idiots and helpless persons lately opened in this county. I half promised her, if it could be done, to get the poor man into it, and maintain him there. And I thought you could possibly put me in the way of doing so."

"I know the asylum. It's called the Home for the Helpless; and it's intended, not for persons who require watching and restraint, but for all, mentally afflicted or not, whose friends are too poor to maintain them in comfort."

"And can you put me in the way of getting this poor fellow into it? You'll believe me when I say that I would much rather pay for him myself than get him in by the favour of another."

"If you are willing to pay, I should think you might get him in. Unless, indeed, they should be full. I am a subscriber to the asylum, but I am not on the committee. I should recommend your calling there yourself. It's at Marlby, about eighteen miles off. The matron is a Mrs. Wilson, quite a lady, I understand. You had better go and see her."

"Thank you. Then on Monday I will go. I may use your name?"

"Certainly. I'll give you a note if you wish. Now don't let this unfortunate discovery distress you. Keep your own counsel, and you can make the poor old woman every amends."

"As far as I can I will; only sometimes I feel almost a fear lest the thing should come out of itself. I have heard—and I have seen, moreover—that partial idiots often display great mental acuteness in exceptional cases. What if a glimmer of recollection should have come into this poor creature's mind since he saw me?"

"Do not worry yourself with improbabilities. Here is the note to Mrs. Wilson. Will you stay luncheon with us?"

"No, thank you." And after a little more conversation on other topics Mr. Dykhart had mounted his horse and ridden away to Croxton.

It is a wretched thing to have a burdensome secret. We are too sensible that we may, by the means we are taking to guard it, be actively promoting its discovery. Mr. Dykhart felt it possible that old Mrs. Elwood, wondering at his eager sympathy and profuse assistance, might shrewdly guess what prompted him. But I do not think she ever did.

Mrs. Dykhart was aware of her husband's lively interest in the poor imbecile, Issachar Elwood. But he had given her no inkling of the great and painful reason for it. It was therefore no surprise to her when, on the morning of Monday, the 18th, he announced his purpose of riding to Marlby and seeing the matron of its charitable institution. He was very thoughtful as he rode. He wondered if there could be, anywhere in the

world that morning, another person burdened with a secret as painful as his own.

He felt it would be a satisfaction to him could any such partner in self-reproach be found, and they could mutually impart their anxieties. Of one such sufferer we ourselves do know. And, strangely enough, their ways were blending into one.

Mr. Dykhart pulled up his horse before the gates of the Marlby Asylum, just as Eva, bending under the weight of her own secret, was quitting Chester for London.

CHAPTER XII.

SOMETHING VERY UNEXPECTED.

NEITHER in its outward appearance nor in its inward condition was the Home for the Helpless very like to a lunatic asylum. No coercion was laid upon its inmates, nor had its conductors either sought or obtained the legal licence for such coercion. The benefits of the Home were therefore restricted to such as were either sensible enough or placid enough to need no forcible control. The afflicted persons whom it held were of various stages of mental weakness, from the idiot, whose mind appeared a blank, to the patient whose malady was corporal rather than mental.

The Marlby Home had been instituted some eight or ten years before the time of which we are writing, to supply an acknowledged want in benevolence, and to succour those who might be too helpless for active life, and not in all points suitable inmates for a lunatic asylum. It depended for its maintenance on the bounty of its few original promoters, assisted by sundry local subscriptions. More than one Cambridge don, his philanthropy dammed up from domestic life, found for it an outlet in this institution at Marlby.

The building was an old manor-house, much altered and enlarged since it had been devoted to the purpose aforesaid. The large garden was screened from all public notice by a high brick wall, as well as by the trees that skirted it. At a little distance from the gates was the house itself. There was no lodge; but when Mr. Dykhart rang the bell, it was very speedily answered by a woman-servant, and his questions were also as readily answered. Mrs. Wilson was at home, and Mr. Dykhart's horse could be taken care of during the period his visit might occupy. In a minute more he had dismounted, and was walking through a small flower-garden, beautifully kept, towards the front door of the house. The woman, who had given the horse in charge to a man, opened the door, ushered Mr. Dykhart into a parlour, and went away to acquaint Mrs. Wilson with his presence. She took with her Mr. Dykhart's card, and also the letter given him by Mr. Leyburn.

The vicar was glad to find himself in a way of lessening the misery which he had himself unwittingly inflicted, and he felt a little less burdened in mind than at any time since the wretched discovery of the previous Friday. Mrs. Wilson was not quick in coming, and he had leisure fully to consider how much of the matter in hand he should make known to her. It surely could not be necessary that he should tell her why he so earnestly craved the benefits of the Home for poor Elwood. He was prepared to pay,—or, if payment were inadmissible, largely to subscribe to the asylum. I know not if his eagerness in this affair was disinterested altogether. He anxiously wished to repair the misfortune which the Elwoods, through him, had suffered. But he also did long to effect that object in a way which would remove the poor imbecile from Croxton. He should feel the moral twinge less acute were there but some distance between himself and that unfortunate man. But should he fail in introducing Issachar Elwood into this or any similar institution, he was prepared (let people wonder and conjecture as they might) to provide for his comfortable maintenance at home. And it is due to the vicar to say that the poor man's mother had expressed a decided preference for the course now being adopted.

Mrs. Wilson was so tardy in coming, that Mr. Dykhart began to fear lest, unknown to the servant who had admitted him, the matron might have quitted the house. However, after a rather long time—undoubtedly made longer by his anxious impatience—a female footstep approached the parlour door. The handle was turned, as if in fear and hesitation, and Mr. Dykhart felt almost sure that the woman was coming in to acknowledge her mistake, and to apologize with due contrition for having wasted the time of a clergyman. Then the door was rapidly opened, and he knew that the comer in was no servant at all. He had been told by Mr. Leyburn that the matron was understood to be a lady, and the woman whom he now beheld had all the look of one, as far as could be comprehended in a first glance. It was not that which made him start in wondering curiosity; it was not that which turned the wonder of doubt into the wonder of certainty, when the lady, with a composure which manifestly demanded all her strength, greeted him in these words:—

"Well, Mr. Dykhart, after so many years we meet again, and you are much less altered than I."

"Miss Somerby! Mrs. Campion! Can it indeed be possible?"

"Mrs. Campion to *you*, if you choose. Mrs. Wilson to every one besides."

And the lady indicated to her visitor to sit down, and also sat down herself.

The next to speak was Mr. Dykhart.

"I have no words in which to express my astonishment, Adela—Mrs. Campion. But a few days ago I heard you spoken of as one who was dead, who had passed out of all the knowledge of the living. I would

have gone over the globe to obtain some certain tidings of you, and now I find you within a morning's ride of my own house ! "

" Ah, Mr. Dykhart ! I deserve no such interest as you have taken in me, although we were such friends in old times ; and dead to all who knew me once I would rather be. I think of myself as of one who, to all my former associations, has died indeed. Only to the unfortunate people in this house do I yet live, and, as you are aware, under a new and strange name."

" But, Mrs. Campion, you will not, now that accident—may I be pardoned the wrong and foolish word !—now that overruling Providence has brought us again together, you will not forbid my seeing you sometimes ? I will keep your secret inviolate,—even from my own wife—even from Leyburn, who introduced me here,—for I am very sure that he has no idea of your being the Mrs. Wilson presiding over this house."

" I think he can have no idea whatever of it. Nothing in his note implies that he has. You will not inform him ? "

" By no means, Adela ! I do not presume to ask your reason for this seclusion ; but knowing that you wish to continue it, no word that might disturb it shall ever escape my lips."

" I thank you, Mr. Dykhart. It is because I feel myself not altogether useless here that I would wish to remain, if I can. And if my cousins, the Leyburns, knew who it is that presides here, they might even think my presence inconsistent with the credit and character of this asylum. Mr. Dykhart, you must not rashly promise a renewal of our former friendship. You appear to be ignorant of the sin which has driven me away from my home and from the world ; and for the sake of—of others besides myself, I shrink from telling you of it. If you knew it you might have little desire to see or know me any more."

" I do not believe it, Adela—it seems as if my tongue insisted upon calling you so, guard myself as I will,—I do not believe it, Mrs. Campion. I know we all commit errors in our lives, which, in the consequences they sometimes bring, come to assume the nature of downright sins. I am suffering myself from such a cause ; and when I fully explain what brought me here to-day, you will see what one heedless, passionate act has done for me. But just now the meeting you has well-nigh put all else out of my thoughts. I say again, that you have any true reason for shrinking from the sight of the world I do not and cannot believe."

Mrs. Campion sadly shook her head.

" Mr. Dykhart, I would willingly leave you in this belief ; but it were dishonest to do so. What I may tell you I will. I have not fallen into any such shame as commonly makes a woman abhorred and an outcast. I have not wronged my husband in *that* manner."

" I thank God to hear you say so, Mrs. Campion ! Not that I needed your assurance to convince me, but that others may be made to know it."

"You mean my cousins at Bestworth? Do they, then, think so evil of me?"

"I fear, indeed, they do. But I also know that they would be truly glad might the matter be explained away."

"They are very good, and I am far from blaming them. Then it is evident my husband has never told them what are the real circumstances of the case. As my wretched guilt has blighted my husband's happiness as well as my own, I am bound not to cause him one sorrow that can be avoided. It is clear he did not wish the Leyburns to know the truth; and, whatever unmerited reproach it may bring upon myself, by that wish of my husband's I will contentedly abide."

There was a strange lack of passion in all she said. She spoke like one to whom sorrow is too familiar to be at all exciting, and to whom resignation, long practised, has ceased to occasion any effort.

Mr. Dykhart regretted that she should be thus marvellously patient. Fully satisfied that she was the victim of some strange mistake, and that she had brooded over some act of folly, until it had grown in her thoughts to the dimensions of a serious crime, the friend who had so unexpectedly found her was already bent on such an explanation and discovery as might issue in her restoration to the esteem she merited from her family, and to the station in society which rightfully belonged to her. But if, with whatever unreason, Mrs. Campion was resolved on continuing in the seclusion into which unknown misfortunes had cast her, of course it was not for him, old friend though he were, to draw her forcibly out of it. But he did not thus readily renounce the idea of persuading her.

"But think again, Mrs. Campion. It could never be the wish of your husband that you should lie under the shadow of a calumnious charge."

"My husband's wish! My husband would not even have me lie under the charge which *does* attach to me. He would—oh, how the thought of his forbearance oppresses me now I once more begin to speak of it!—he would cloak my great sin from the world altogether. Hence his silence,—hence, perhaps, the mistaken ideas which are afloat amongst my former friends."

"Nay, but, Mrs. Campion, you know already how likely their conjectures are to exceed the truth—very greatly to exceed it."

"Indeed, I doubt that. Many a poor degraded creature, if her weakness and temptation were fully considered, might think herself less guilty than I am. You are surprised at hearing me talk so, Mr. Dykhart?"

"I am pained, deeply pained by it. But I am not convinced. I will judge you from what I *knew* of you years ago,—not from what I hear you say now."

"Well, Mr. Dykhart, part at least of my sorrows I will now tell you. You shall hear enough to convince you that I act rightly in shutting

myself thus away from the world. I owe a duty, not to my husband only, but also to my child.”

“Your child! your daughter! There, indeed, my dear Mrs. Campion, it seems to me that you have the most powerful reason for quitting this extreme seclusion. Can it be good for her? She, as I understand, lives with you.”

“She—my daughter—my Theresa—live with me! God help me! never have I so much as looked upon her since that dreadful day—it is more than fourteen years ago—when I also parted with my husband. Who told you that my child was living with me?”

“My friend Leyburn told me that Mr. Gerald Campion had told *him* so.”

“My husband’s brother? Why, *he* knows all about it! With two exceptions, I know not if (besides my husband and myself) anybody else knows all the truth as he knows it. Could such a misstatement have come from him?”

“I know my friend Leyburn to be a man of truth; and he believes Mr. Gerald Campion to be as truthful as himself. Surely, Adela, you must now see that you are very probably the victim of some wicked contrivance. It is not for me, so utterly ignorant as I am of the matter, to indicate any person as the contriver; only every word you say assures me more and more that you have had secret enemies, and that your timidity, your culpable timidity, has given them a most fatal advantage over you.”

“You are indeed ignorant of what has taken place, Mr. Dykhart; and it is but your ignorance which enables you to think thus mercifully of me. As for my child—now almost a woman,—she is under her father’s care, or under such care as he may have provided for her. My protection could only be her bane.”

“Well, but are you aware that few or none appear to know where Mr. Campion is? Many a time since I came back to England (about six months ago) have I asked after you and after him. Not one word of information could I ever obtain until, but last Thursday, I dined at Bestworth, and all that Leyburn himself could tell me was that Mr. Campion travelled restlessly up and down the world, and behaved like a man who has got no home.”

“If so—and I know it to be true—my sin has made home hateful to him. How dare I upbraid him with it?”

“But for your daughter,—you have a right to speak on her behalf. Nay, *ought* you to acquiesce in what is so likely to injure her?”

“I can trust to Herbert. And, alas! I have no such right to expect that he should trust me. And I have reason to know that he would not acknowledge my claim to interfere. Some little while after the dreadful discovery, to which I cannot now more fully allude, I wrote to my husband, entreating him, not indeed entirely to restore my child to me, but to permit me sometimes to see her. I have his written answer now. I need not and will not repeat his words. I could not possibly mistake

their purport, singular as they certainly were. I was told by them that my husband meant from thenceforth to consider himself the only parent of his child. And bitter as it was to me then, and is now, I feel indeed that he may have been right, that he *was* right, and that my only hope ought to be that I may not be found unworthy to meet my child hereafter in heaven."

And Mrs. Campion wept exceedingly, shedding tears for the first time during all her conversation with Mr. Dykhart. The vicar offered no immediate interruption to her grief. He was now most fully persuaded that the family affairs of the Campions had been perturbed by some strange influence, which it might be possible to detect and drag to light. Presently he said,—

"I cannot contradict you, Adela, since I do not know what your errors may have been. The total separation of a mother from her daughter requires (all would tell you) a very decided cause for justification."

"I shall tell you, Mr. Dykhart, enough to assure you that, in this case, it is just and right. You are aware to what purpose this house is devoted, and what is the work that is here carried on by me?"

"Yes, Adela, I know it well. I have a very sad reason for knowing it; and it is that knowledge which brought me here to-day. I know how congenial to your disposition, as I knew you in your younger and brighter days, must this work of mercy be. And I am sorry that your separation from society robs so blessed an example of half its value."

"But you may not also know why I chose this form of doing good above any other. Why, wishing to find some assuagement for my sorrow in succouring others, I chose to devote myself to the mentally afflicted."

"Had you any special reason for fixing upon such cases?"

"Yes, indeed I had. It is an affliction which in my own person I have sustained!"

"Adela! You! I cannot understand you."

And her hearer doubted whether this were not the clue to all besides. Was she insane even now? Had long continuance among the mentally afflicted thrown from its supremacy her own once vigorous mind? What was he to think? In his great bewilderment he would have accepted almost any answer which might have been given him. Mrs. Campion saw how he looked, and she even half smiled.

"Are you thinking that I may be dangerous even now, Mr. Dykhart? I do not think Doctor Grove, who visits us here, would leave me the mistress of the place if he were not satisfied of my perfect sanity. No; it was but a temporary visitation, and hardly any one could have wondered at it."

"Then it followed close upon the events which were so painful to you?"

"It did. The shock, so utterly unexpected, so fearful, as if one had risen from the dead to bring my sin to my remembrance,—the horrid

discovery of the affair drove me really insane for the time. In one most awful hour I truly lost at once my husband, my child, and what hardly seemed worth retaining after the loss of those—my very reason; and to that hour, which I know not how I ever survived, I had been looking forward for months, for years indeed, as to the very happiest in all my life. But I must have wearied you already with all I have said."

"No indeed, my dear friend. I can only hope that, some day or other, if not now, you will confide more fully in me. Not—and you will believe me when I say so—that I seek to gratify a prying curiosity; but because I cannot help thinking that you might thus enable me to serve you. But I fail to see why, on this account, you should submit to utter separation from your daughter."

"Do you not see, my dear Mr. Dykhart, that (since all who knew us then most probably know how my reason was overturned for a while)—it would be a great injury to Theresa for me to appear as her mother? It might be said that the malady was likely to be latent in her also."

"Nay, but, Mrs. Campion, is not your utter seclusion from society the very thing most likely to suggest that your malady is a permanent one?"

"I think not; and I am not shut out altogether from the knowledge of my husband. Twice in every year I go up to London, and present myself before his lawyers, Messrs. Plodder and Poring, and through Mr. Plodder Herbert is informed of my continuance in health. But, as I have said, there is another reason, and a greater reason, why I must be content to leave my daughter alone."

"But you are permitted to hear of her progress and of her prospects?"

"I have been bidden to rest in the assurance that she is well cared for, and in good hands. When I saw Mr. Plodder last, which was about two months ago, I was vaguely told that some great good fortune was likely to befall her. But it appears that I am never to see her; and, strange to say, Mr. Plodder, though his delicate consideration for me is beyond all praise—Mr. Plodder often talks as if he wondered at my asking so often and so anxiously. My beautiful child! She is now in her eighteenth year; but I always fancy her as on the day when last I saw her?"

"She was very young then?"

"She was just three years old. But, both in mind and body, you would have taken her to be at least four."

"I wish I could see her. And I will not despair but that I may. Was she like yourself?"

"Very little indeed, dear child! And she was not very like her papa. But you remember my sister Julia?"

"Yes, better than you may suppose. I have her picture at home; that picture which was hung up at Gravelling, you know. I bought it to send to poor Fitzadam at Baden. But I will contrive that you shall see it before it goes."

"Thank you, although I have a miniature of her myself. My little Theresa was, when last I saw her, an exact likeness of dear Julia as I remember her when at that very age. You know I was the elder by four or five years. So thoroughly did my little girl remind me of her aunt, that I used to call her 'Lully'—the pet name we had given my sister; and I do think the child was oftener addressed by that name than by her own name—Theresa. But I would rather now talk no more. Do not think, Mr. Dykhart, that I would repel the sympathy you offer me, or that it would not be a relief to me to tell you all. At some future time I may perhaps feel justified in doing so, but not all at once. I have no hope of ever winning back my justly forfeited happiness. But your friendship, if you accord it me, will comfort me greatly."

"And that shall be entirely yours, Adela Campion; yours, even granting that all your self-accusation is thoroughly just. I gather from what you say that your married life was, for a while, a happy one."

"It was not to my happiness to be so separated from my dear husband,—he living abroad, and I in England. And there were other matters—family matters,—and those things kept me in some distress and anxiety; and they, indeed, led me into all the misery of the after time. But happiness—as far as depended on the devoted love of the tenderest of husbands!—oh, never was a woman made so happy! And how did I return it all! Oh, I marvel—not that my senses deserted me for a time, but that the unlooked-for horror did not sink me into hopeless madness altogether!"

She had risen from her chair, and stood as if again face to face with the terror which had once deprived her of reason. The struggle was momentary, and she was again calm. She reseated herself, and spoke with no excitement at all.

"Mr. Dykhart, I beg your pardon; I have overrated my powers of self-control, and I must not talk any more of the past. Let me hear what it was that brought you to this house."

"A very sad errand, Mrs. Campion. By the way, I need not tell you that, in speaking of you, I shall be careful always to talk of you as Mrs. Wilson. I come on an errand very painful to me, and have need of sympathy and charity in my turn."

And then Mr. Dykhart told Mrs. Campion what he would hardly have told Mrs. Wilson, and informed her as to the cause of poor Elwood's affliction, and his own consequent desire to serve him. Mrs. Campion assured her friend of bygone days that she both could and would admit the poor man into the home very speedily. And thus the weighty matter which alone had brought Mr. Dykhart thither took up not one-hundredth part of the time which they spent together. Mrs. Wilson (when speaking of her as connected with Marlby, we ought, perhaps, to call her by the only name she bore there)—Mrs. Wilson gave the vicar some account of the founding and arrangement of the institution at present governed by

her. After the fatal events which had issued in her total severance from family duties, she had been left with a very liberal provision, and with no restraint upon her conduct, except such as her own preferences might dictate; and she craved some employment in which she might hope to taste the sense of being useful and doing good.

“For a time,” she said, “I felt as if indeed I had been walled up alive; as though the grave had closed upon me, and I partook of it in all except its rest. The prospect of a work like this (in happier hours I should have shuddered at and shrunk from it) was to me as a light breaking in to a valley and shadow of death. It was Doctor Brainbury, the master of St. Martin’s College (at Cambridge), who first projected this institution. He is aware of my unhappy position, but not of the very circumstances which led to it. And the general body of subscribers are content to accept Mrs. Wilson on the testimony of the committee. I am thankful to devote to the asylum my whole spare income, as well as all my time. I trust you do not think me wrong?”

“Wrong in devoting your entire self to this blessed and holy work? No, a thousand times no, Adela! Wrong in turning your back upon society, and submitting to exclusion from your own rightful home? *That* question I may not answer until I know more. And now indeed, Mrs. Campion, it is time for me to go. I trust I may often see you again. And as soon as you can receive him I will bring this unfortunate man Elwood.”

“But stay, Mr. Dykhart; you will look over the house before you go?”

There was a funeral at Croxton at four, and Mr. Dykhart would have to ride quickly to reach his parish in good time. But a rapid inspection of the asylum he could not refuse to take. We need say no more than that all arrangements betokened thoughtful benevolence and sympathetic contrivance. It is almost a waste of words to say that the vicar of Croxton became at once a subscriber to this charity. And then he remounted his horse and rode away home. It may be a pleasure to know that he reached Croxton in very good time for the funeral; not so much through his own speed as through the backwardness of the mourners themselves.

The extraordinary discovery made by him did much in shutting out the painful event which had issued in his visit to Marlby. He had promised, neither to the Leyburns, nor to Mrs. Dykhart herself, to reveal the identity of Mrs. Wilson with Mrs. Campion. And we need not say that the promise was entirely observed. But not the less—we should rather say all the more—did the matter, so imperfectly understood by him, ferment in his brain, and originate suppositions of the strangest kind. That Adela Campion was rather sinned against than sinning; that some cruel advantage had been taken of her errors, to ban her as one chargeable with crimes,—this belief had fixed itself in Mr. Dykhart’s mind, and very forcible must have been the evidence that would uproot it. With one of

his disposition, to suspect a wrong, and to long to begin amending it, were feelings which must go along together. But apart from her earnest desire to be left alone, there appeared no ready way of demanding restitution for Adela Campion. *Whom* was he to accuse as having wronged her? Who, as far as was known, had any kind of interest in her seclusion? The vicar felt himself cut off, alike by her inclination and by his own ignorance, from any chance of acting as her defender. That was the present state of affairs. But it might not continue always. Some further knowledge might be given him. A little more intercourse with himself might increase his ascendancy as a friend of her younger days, and embolden her to make a complete confession to him. And in some unforeseen manner a *motive* for all the treachery with which he credited her enemies might become a proved and manifest thing to him.

With such reflections, and many others easily conceivable, Monday evening descended upon him, and the morning of Tuesday succeeded. In the middle of the latter day—that is, at about half-past one—Mr. Dykhart set out for Bestworth, to tell his friend Leyburn about his success in obtaining for the poor imbecile admission at Marlby.

Henry Leyburn was never excited, but he looked almost on the verge of that vulgar weakness when Mr. Dykhart found him pondering and wondering over some papers in his library.

"Dykhart," he said, "I am truly glad you are come. I was just thinking how much I should like to have you here. I've had a most extraordinary surprise to-day.

Mr. Dykhart's heart leaped up into his mouth. Surely his friend must, in his turn, have discovered the secret which attached to the matron of the Marlby Home. If so, how could he help acknowledging that the secret was known to himself? But Mr. Leyburn's next words denoted the matter to be one far different.

"Dykhart, you remember, when you called here on Saturday, I was telling you that I had just read (in the newspaper) of the death of my poor old uncle Gryffyth, in Wales?"

It had been no great wonder, with the absorbing interest he had felt in other matters, if the vicar had quite forgotten the fact. But he did remember it, and he said so.

"Well, as a friend, I may tell you that I did indulge some hope of inheriting his property, for he had a considerable estate in North Wales, and I am his nearest relation,—his only near relation at all, I may say. But, as I told you before, we had no intercourse for many years; and I cannot and do not complain of his excluding me. Of course, when I knew that I had been left to ascertain his death from a newspaper, I made up my mind that he had left me nothing at all. Nor, indeed, had he. But this very day—However, to make it clearer, I must tell you one or two other things about my uncle. He had no relations for whom he cared particularly. But there was a family, not living very far from him, who'

were connected with him in this way. His father—of course my own grandfather—married very greatly beneath him for the second time. My mother, who was nearly grown up at the time, was very angry; and she became quite estranged from her home, long before she was married to my father. But my uncle, who was quite a boy, took to his stepmother, and liked her. She had no children of her own; but it seems that a brother of hers, who kept an hotel in Liverpool, had two daughters. One of those daughters fell into terrible misfortune,—marrying a man who had got a wife already, and who, moreover, was transported for bigamy. As far as I am aware, the poor woman—Miss Roberts, her name was—did the thing in complete ignorance. The other sister married a Welsh clergyman of the name of Dowlas. You know the clergy in Wales are a peculiar set of men; well, these Dowlases, and that poor unfortunate sister who went to live with them when the father died, naturally built great expectations on my uncle Gryffyth's death. I was always led to believe—but from what I have heard to-day it seems that I was wrong—that this family were his declared heirs. And I concluded that they would be very careful in guarding him from any one (myself, for instance) whose claims would be likely to interfere with their own. When I got the news of his death I made up my mind that they had inherited his estates. I was, indeed, both right and wrong in this. And I now come to the extraordinary matter I spoke of. About an hour ago, or not much more, a fly drove up to the door; and I was presently told that it was myself, and not my wife, whom the visitors were anxious to see. Mrs. Leyburn was away—gone to Cambridge to buy some mourning. I went into the drawing-room, and there I saw a very beautiful young lady—almost a girl to look at her,—and with her a most respectable elderly woman. It was the young girl who took all the talking upon herself; and she certainly made me listen to the most astonishing, romantic story, which I ever heard or read of. It remains to be shown whether it is true."

Here Mr. Leyburn paused for a moment's breathing. He presently resumed,—

"This was her story. She gave her name as Miss March—Miss Eva March. She said she had never known who or what were her parents; that she can only remember that, some fourteen years ago, she was found wandering in the streets of London; that a country clergyman then staying in town took her in, and provided for her during his life, and arranged that she should be cared for after his death. She said that the clergyman's name was *Ferrier*; that he held the living of Bengerley, in Buckinghamshire. I have ascertained by an old *Clergy List* that such a clergyman *did* hold that living. Miss March went on to say that the person who accompanied her, and whom she called 'Mrs. Check,' had been housekeeper to that Mr. Ferrier, and could confirm a great deal of what she said. She told me that, since Mr. Ferrier's death, she had lived partly at school and partly with a family of the name of Ballow at Minchley.

She further said, that until about a month ago she was left utterly without intelligence, true or false, as to her origin or her parents. But just at that time she was led to believe that they had been actually discovered by her, or rather for her. Now this is just the point of her story which fills me with the greatest suspicion. All she had said before she spoke with perfect candour and freedom, but at this part of it she seemed hesitating and confused. She gave no clear account as to how the discovery had been made, or whose exertions had brought it to pass. But she told me pretty freely the position in which it had placed her. It appears—I am sensible what a fool I may appear in gravely rehearsing the story,—it appears that this Mr. Ferrier, some years before he picked up *this* child in the streets, had found a castaway baby somewhere, and put it out to nurse. It died. But he had some suspicion that its nurse had been bribed to feign its death; and when he found that little girl years afterwards, he came to the conclusion that the castaway baby and she were one and the same child. Well, just a month ago (I am quoting this young lady's own words) some sort of a discovery was made, that apparently proved her *to be* that child, and no other. And now I have to tell you whose child I am asked to believe she appeared. I was telling you of that unfortunate Miss Roberts who married a scoundrel who took her in, having a wife already. Well, Miss March declares to me that she was led to believe, from evidence that she could not doubt, that she was the daughter of that unhappy Mrs. Roberts (as she calls herself). Believing that her duty called her to do so, she left her Minchley friends for a time to live with her mother and the Dowlases, near Carnarvon. She had not been there long when it was made known to her that she most certainly was *not* that lost child of Mrs. Roberts,—that it died in early infancy, as the nurse declared. Now, from fear of the shock it might give to poor Mrs. Roberts, she delayed to tell her that she had not found her daughter after all. While she was considering how she could best break the matter to her, my uncle Gryffyth died. He had heard of the supposed discovery of his stepmother's lost niece (grand-niece, that is); he bequeathed her the bulk of his property, to be held in trust for her until she attains the age of *twenty-three*. Of course he did so under a wrong impression; and his will describes her under a name and kinship which are not hers. She has come to tell me that she is overwhelmed with sorrow at having thus been the means of injuring others. For she has reason to know that (had he never heard of her) the Dowlases and that poor Mrs. Roberts would have been handsomely provided for. That, she says, is what has caused her to appeal to me."

"But what—the story is altogether so extraordinary, that one scarcely knows which improbability to attack first,—what does she ask you to do?"

"If my uncle has really left his property to a non-existent person, of course it is void, and I, as heir-at-law, take everything. She comes to

ask me if I will do anything for the Dowlases and others, who through this complication of blunders may have lost all."

"Does she profess to have done all this entirely of her own counsel?"

"Not at all. She says that in her desperate perplexity she appealed to Mr. Lewis, my uncle's attorney. She has brought a letter from him. I know that such was the name of my uncle's man of business. If this be indeed a plot, it is a very deeply and cleverly laid one."

"But what should make you think it likely to be any such thing? They would not plot to give you Mr. Gryffyth's property."

"Very true. But of the real intentions of my poor uncle I know just nothing at all. How can I tell what scheming and counter-scheming may have been going on amongst all the expectants? It may, perhaps, be just a common swindle. This beautiful, bewitching young lady of the tender conscience may possibly wind up with borrowing (or seeking to borrow) fifty pounds, wherewith to procure some missing and important document. That is the kind of conclusion to which these interesting stories often come."

"But she has made no such appeal to you at present."

"No, not yet. And very likely I may greatly wrong her by any supposition of the sort. But there is one thing which I cannot help feeling suspicious. She brings documents to prove a part of what she has said; and she told me that she had about her a letter from Mr. Dowlas (the Welsh clergyman, you know) which had led her to believe that she was his wife's niece. When I said something to the effect that I should like to see it, she suddenly looked baffled and confused, and said that she was not at liberty to show it to *me*. The emphasis was her own. Now that looked bad."

"But you do not deny that her story looks genuine in itself?"

"She speaks with an air of truth. But her story (to begin with) is so very strange, you see."

"But strange stories are true at times. And I do not speak from hearsay only when I say so."

Mr. Dykhart might have confirmed his remark by his yesterday's experience. But he was not at liberty to do so.

"Well, Dykhart," said Mr. Leyburn, "I should very much like you to see her. I should like you to see her without me. Unless her very slips and hesitations have been calculated beforehand, she certainly did convey the idea that it was *to me* in particular that she could not venture to show that letter,—I mean the letter from Mr. Dowlas. You might challenge her to show it to *you*."

"Then you ascribe some importance to this letter?"

"Unquestionably. It was the *alleged* cause of her accepting the Dowlases and Robertses as the relations from whom she had been so long and strangely separated. There may be no such letter in existence, or its contents might really expose the trick which is being attempted."

"Well, do not let us condemn her until we are *sure*. Where is she now? I should like to see her, and to talk to her."

"She is walking about the garden. Maria is with her, and the old woman is somewhere about the garden too."

There was a glass door leading out of a vestibule close to the library, into the front garden. By this door Mr. Dykhart, quitting his friend, went out into the garden.

He passed a corner which afforded a glimpse of the kitchen-garden through an open door. Visible in it was Mrs. Check, rapt in admiration, not so much of the fruit-trees themselves as of the well-made nets which covered them.

Mr. Dykhart passed on into the shrubbery. For neither Miss Leyburn nor the strange young lady were in the flower-garden immediately near to the house.

Behind the shrubbery was a piece of rock-work, backed by some Portuguese laurels; and sounds as of occasional words drew the vicar in that direction. The shrubbery was intricate and well grown. Consequently, you might come very near to the person you sought without seeing him, or being seen yourself by him.

Mr. Dykhart wound his way on until, emerging close upon the rock-work, he descried within a few yards of him the young woman who could be no other than the mysterious Miss March. He stood looking at her, and she, unconscious of his presence, remained standing as before. She looked thoughtful and anxious, and the beauty so abundantly bestowed upon her owed none of its brightness to a joyful heart within. She stood as framed in the laurels; and few are the men who would not have arrested their progress to gaze at her. But that face! That form! That air! The attitude itself!

"How do you do, Mr. Dykhart?"

He heard not. He saw not, save one thing only. If the portrait which he had purchased at Gravelling, and which lay in his study at Croxton, had been endowed with actual life, and had alighted in that garden, Mr. Dykhart would have beheld—almost what he was beholding now.

"How do you do, Mr. Dykhart?"

Unconscious of the first address, he was conscious, notwithstanding, that this was the second.

"I beg your pardon, indeed I do, Miss Leyburn, for my rudeness. But I was—was absent at the moment, and did not hear you." And turning round, he shook hands with the eldest daughter of his friend. Eva, in her turn, was walking away in the other direction.

"Papa has told you, I suppose," said Miss Leyburn, "what a curious visit he has had?"

"Yes, Miss Leyburn. I forgot; I came expressly to have some talk with the young lady. You will excuse me?"

Maria Leyburn walked back towards the house. Mr. Dykhart went after Eva.

When he came up to her she turned round, and on a nearer view of her face, the likeness was more exact than ever.

It was he who spoke first.

"I may appear rude in thrusting myself upon you in this manner, Miss March, but my friend Mr. Leyburn has requested me to introduce myself. Allow me at once to do so,—my name is Dykhart."

And he drew out and put into Eva's hand a card with his name and address. It was the card-case which he had produced at the sale in Gravelling Castle.

Eva fancied she had at some time or other, heard the name. And it is very probable that it had been let fall in her presence by Mr. or Mrs. Ballow.

"As one of Mr. Leyburn's oldest friends," the vicar went on, "I, of course, am interested in all that concerns him. And your coming here to-day is a thing which very much concerns him."

"Yes, I know it does. And I know how forward and improper a thing it must appear to many for me to come in person. But I thought it my duty to act on the lawyer's advice: he advised my coming here; and very unwillingly I did so."

Mr. Dykhart was listening with interest. That she could tell. But she could not tell that it was her voice, and not the words it conveyed, which kept his ears so straitly imprisoned. The voice was *not* that voice in which the portrait, if endowed with breath, would have spoken. But it was a voice not strange in his ears. It was a voice which had sometimes revisited his memory across a distance of years, and which, within four-and-twenty hours, he had come to hear once more.

"Certainly, Miss March," he replied, but not immediately, "certainly, if there were any harm in coming—which I should not admit—no reasonable creature would blame you. Your adviser would be alone in fault. But do not imagine that Mr. Leyburn thinks so; only—only—you appear a very sensible young lady, and will not take offence at my saying so—your history is indeed a most singular one."

"I am very sensible that it is, Mr. Dykhart; but I have the means of proving its truth. I can show that poor Mr. Gryffyth did, under a terrible mistake, bequeath his property to me,—or rather, to the person whose name and place I had wrongly assumed. And I can show also that *that* person is certainly dead, and that (as I understand the law to be) Mr. Gryffyth's will was in reality no will at all."

"Certainly. But allow me to point out to you, Miss March, and I beg of you to consider me a friend in doing so—allow me to point out to you that that is not quite all. It accounts for Mr. Gryffyth's bequest, and for your inability to accept it. But it leaves unexplained one very important portion of your story. It by no means accounts for your

accepting a place in the family—that family in Wales; a place which you so very soon discovered not to be your rightful one. It does not account for your continuing to hold that place, though but for another hour, after you had found out your error in taking it. Now do you see that these questions will be asked by any one judging of your story?"

"I do indeed see it, and I am fully prepared to answer the questions. I know I am bound to explain all I can."

"Then may I just put one or two queries now?"

"Certainly, sir. And I thank you for making the whole matter a little easier for me."

They had all this while been slowly walking about the shrubbery. Just at this point they approached a garden seat. They both sat down. Mr. Dykhart proceeded to put his questions one by one.

"May I then first ask why you so readily accepted the family in North Wales for your kindred? Was it that you felt drawn towards them by any sort of affection?"

"Oh no, very far from that. To one of them—I mean Mrs. Dowlas—I felt the greatest aversion. Mr. Dowlas I have learnt to esteem since; and Mrs. Roberts I most deeply pity. But I had the strongest reasons possible for wishing to think that the story might be false. But it *appeared* true, and I felt it my duty to act upon its truth."

"But then, Miss March, you did not quit them, little as you enjoyed your home there (so I gather from your words), when you found your mistake out?"

"No; poor Mrs. Roberts, who thought herself my mother, might have died of so sudden a shock. And I dared not tell Mr. Dowlas himself, for he had promised, in case of hearing any such thing, to tell his wife."

"Who appears to preside over her home like some vengeful fury. However, you do, I am sure, see how strange is the story. The proofs which are one day so strong as to induce you to take Mrs. Roberts as your mother, turn out, in a few days more, to be the most baseless inventions. That—I think you follow me in what I say,—that is what the world will be very stubborn in disbelieving—unless it be very well proved. Now can it thus be proved? Can you show that, fallacious as the story turned out, it looked for the time as true as it was strange?"

"Yes, I think I can. I am sure that I can."

"You have written evidence to bring forward? Then why not show it to Mr. Leyburn?"

"I scarcely know what to say. I have been warned that I must not show it to him."

It was to this point, as we need hardly stop to show, that all Mr. Dykhart's previous questions had intentionally led. He pushed forward another step yet.

"Do I understand you to say, Miss March, that to *him* in particular

you cannot produce your evidence? You know that he, of all other persons, is entitled, is bound, to look this matter through and through.”

“I know it quite well. It is a cruel misfortune that I cannot show the letter to *him*. But so I am advised; and for a reason which appears quite sufficient.”

Both were silent for one or two minutes. Then suddenly the vicar spoke.

“Miss March, I think I can tell for myself why you find a difficulty in letting Mr. Leyburn see the paper which contained the false account of your birth. It contained allusions to a certain name, and that name was—Campion?”

“It was! It is! Did you ever see the letter—Mr. Dowlas’s letter—yourself?”

“I never heard the name of Mr. Dowlas till within the last hour, believe me, Miss March.”

“Then perhaps you saw it since it was received. It was not addressed to me, but to Mrs. Ferrier. She is—she is—that is, the Mr. Ferrier who brought me up was her brother-in-law.”

“So on that account she takes an interest in you. But neither of her, as far as I know, did I ever hear until just now. ‘Ferrier!’ Somebody was talking, the other day, of a Captain Ferrier distinguished in the Crimea.”

“Yes, she is his mother,” said Eva. And assisted by the counter-interest in Mr. Dykhart’s mind, she succeeded in keeping *that* thing a secret.

“I am at a loss to know, then, how you found that out, Mr. Dykhart.”

“I know that my friend Leyburn has a connection of the name of *Campion*; and that painful matters, which I myself only half understand, have made it a difficulty to speak of her before him. That is one thing which helped me to the knowledge of it. Another is—a thing which I would rather not mention to you now, but which I may be spared to tell you another day. I wonder if, besides the name of *Campion* in that letter, there occurs the name of *Somerby*?”

“‘*Somerby*’? Yes, something is said about a Lady Anne *Somerby*.”

“Miss March, I would not for the world excite in you any false hopes, but I do not think you would ever repent confiding in me.”

“I will confide in you, Mr. Dykhart. Here is the letter, and here also is the note I got this very morning, advising me not to show the letter to Mr. Leyburn himself.”

Mr. Dykhart read the note on the spot, and so may we. Thus it was written:—

“*Minchley, 18th August, 1856.*

“MY DEAR EVA,—I hope this note will reach you before you quit London to-morrow morning, on your visit into Cambridgeshire.

“It has just been brought to my mind that there is a serious obstacle to your showing that letter written by Mr. Dowlas six weeks ago, to the

Mr. Leyburn with whom you are concerned. I have ascertained that he is son-in-law to the late Bishop Rumicles of Isly. Now in that important paper left in our hands by Mr. Ferrier, *Mrs. Campion*, whose name so strangely occurs in the letter in your possession, is described as *niece to the Bishop of Isly*, and (as the date makes evident) the same Bishop of Isly Mrs. Leyburn's father. I sympathize with you most deeply in the difficulties which appear to spring up in the most unexpected quarters at every turn. But their very multitude assures me that a gracious Providence is preparing a happy issue out of all.

"A *certain gentleman* is now at *Edinburgh* with his sick friend, *Maxwell*, and is himself quite well. Mrs. Ballow's kindest love. Hoping to see you soon at Minchley again,

"I am, your affectionate friend,

"FREDERICK BALLOW."

Mr. Dykhart read this note, and handed it back again. He saw that the letter was very long.

"I think," he said, "I should prefer taking this with me into the house. You may rely on my not showing it to Mr. Leyburn without your most decided permission.

"Do as you think proper, Mr. Dykhart."

"Then I *will* take it in with me. Shall I find you here when I come back, Miss March?"

"Yes; unless you think it would be better for me to leave this place at once."

"By no means, Miss March. I'm sure you'll greatly offend Mr. and Mrs. Leyburn if you do. Then I will look for you here as soon as I have read this."

He went in, taking the letter accordingly. At the door he was met by the rector.

"Well, Dykhart, you've been at it a good long while. Have you demolished her story, or does it stand the most rigorous tests you can apply?"

"Leyburn, I believe that her truthfulness is beyond all doubt. And you can have ample proof of it. I have seen and heard her with the deepest interest. Do not be offended when I say that I cannot at once tell you why."

Mr. Leyburn gloried in being superlatively practical. And if he had felt more curiosity he would not have owned it.

"Well," he said, "thank you for the trouble you have taken on my account. Excuse me now; I have to go into the village. I need not tell you to use the library as your own. Ask for anything you may want."

"Thank you: I am going to sit there a little, with your leave. Has Mrs. Leyburn come back?"

"No, not yet. Very likely I shall be back again before she returns. You stay and dine, of course?" And the rector walked into the churchyard, and thence into the village of Bestworth.

Mr. Dykhart retreated into the library, and read the letter which had beguiled Eva into association with the family at Llynbwlyn.

What it was he read we very well know. With what feelings he read it we may very well imagine. What he said to Eva when he came back to her in the shrubbery we may briefly rehearse.

"Miss March, I quite appreciate your friend Mr. Ballow's advice, in his warning you to keep this paper from Mr. Leyburn's eyes. It was wise counsel from his point of view. But I conclude he has no *personal* knowledge of the Campion family?"

"No, none, I am sure. I know he has a great idea that they have some unknown connection with the mystery about myself. But he says he can find no way of bringing it home to them. He certainly does not know them."

"But I *do* know Mrs. Campion. I—what am I saying?—I knew her as Miss Adela Somerby in years gone by. And it is not impossible that I may be somewhat better able to obtain her acquaintance in the present than your friend. But allow me to ask you, Miss March, have you no early recollections which might help you towards ascertaining your real origin, and thereby setting at rest all these vexatious matters which have sprung out of your *supposed* origin? Mr. Leyburn said that (as you had been telling him), you remember being turned out destitute into the streets. Now have you no remembrance of anything before that?"

"Very dim and broken ones. But such as they are, I think them to be real ones. I fancy myself to have been in a comfortable home, to have had a mother; and although I have no remembrance of my father, I somehow fancy that my mother was not a widow."

"Do you remember yourself as bearing any name?"

"I hardly do. But I have been often told that, when I was found crying in the streets, I told Mr. Ferrier that my name was 'Lully.'"

And that was verily the name by which, as Mrs. Campion had told him only the day before, she commonly called her child; the striking likeness to the sister once called so having suggested such an appellation.

There gathered over the soul of Mr. Dykhart a feeling of reverent awe. It was as though the curtain behind which the work unseen is commonly done had now been lifted for a while; and it were given to him to track, footstep by footstep, the great mysterious way.

"I shall venture," he presently said, "to introduce myself to your friend,—and, as he appears to be, your guardian, Mr. Ballow; and he will judge how much or how little confidence to place in what I shall tell him."

And then they returned to the house. They had the drawing-room all to themselves. And their conversation became somewhat general. Mr. Dykhart watched with unresting eagerness for those turns of mind and disposition which are wont in a thousand accidental ways to betray hereditary likeness.

After a while the wheels of Mrs. Leyburn's carriage were heard outside. The vicar went out to meet her, leaving Miss March alone in the room.

He met Mrs. Leyburn just alighting at the front door. She asked if Maria were within.

"I think not, Mrs. Leyburn. She was in the garden an hour ago or more. But I fancy she has gone somewhere else."

"Gone to call at the Fillips, I dare say. Is Henry within?"

"No, Mrs. Leyburn; but he will be very soon, I imagine. I want you, if you please, to go and see the young lady who is now in the drawing-room. Leyburn will tell you more about her by-and-bye. She calls herself Miss March, and she has come about a matter arising from Mr. Gryffyth's death."

"How singular, to be sure! What can it mean?"

"I will tell you presently. I'm sure you will understand, when once you see her, *why* I have asked you to look at her. Will you just go in and look at her; and then come into the library and tell me what you think of her? Indeed, if you think this odd, you'll excuse me when you have complied with my request—my urgent request."

"Of course, Mr. Dykhart, it would never enter my mind that you would ask anything at all wrong. You make me very curious indeed. I'll go at once, and you can await me in the library, as you say."

The vicar entered the library as Mrs. Leyburn entered the drawing-room. She came to him very soon.

"Well, Mrs. Leyburn?"

"I wonder, Mr. Dykhart, if I had not seen that picture within the last few days, whether I should have been so struck with the likeness as I have been? As it is, it astounded me. But you do not consider it more than an accidental likeness?"

"Yes, Mrs. Leyburn, I do look on it as much more."

"You call her 'Miss March;' but who or what does she pretend to be?"

"She pretends to nothing. She is ignorant of her parentage. I think myself less ignorant about it."

"Who do you suppose her to be?"

"I think her to be Mrs. Campion's daughter."

"But what has brought her here?"

And Mr. Dykhart explained how Eva's errand had arisen out of her mistaken identity with the child of Mrs. Roberts, and Mr. Gryffyth's consequent favour towards her. While the explanation was yet going on, Mr. Leyburn returned, and they presently all adjourned into the drawing-room. Mr. Dykhart told Eva that, presuming on his own friendship with the Leyburns, he would assure her that she need not hesitate to lay before them the letter of Mr. Dowlas, although it did set the conduct of Mrs. Campion in a somewhat strange and sinister light. As they had always

given quite another interpretation to the Campion mystery, it was to them rather a relief than a grief. For it will surprise nobody that Eva adopted the counsel of her new but devoted friend.

That friend remained to dinner, although he had dined at Croxton already. Eva and Mrs. Check remained at Bestworth for the night; and ere they quitted it for London the next day our heroine had the happiness of writing to the old Welsh lawyer, to say that the much-dreaded interview with Mr. Gryffyth's heir-at-law had proved no such very dreadful thing in the result,—that Mr. Leyburn had taken a generous and candid view of the position,—that he had assured her of his intention to make a substantial sacrifice in behalf of Mr. Dowlas, and likewise to provide for poor Mrs. Roberts. Moreover, he would be glad to meet Mr. Lewis in London on the occasion of proving the will. For of course, as far as concerned the other legacies, the document was as valid as could possibly be.

Eva and Mrs. Check took with them a few remembrances of Bestworth contributed by the greenhouses and gardens. Mrs. Check, in particular, carried away a large vegetable marrow, which bumped about amongst her corns, and cruelly avenged its exile from its native hotbed. They arrived at Minchley that very night, for Eva was longing to be with the Ballows again. And a happy day of reunion it was for them.

On the very next morning—that is, on Wednesday, the 20th of August—Mr. Ballow received a letter from the vicar of Croxton. It briefly expressed his interest in Eva, his reasons for it, and his firm belief that the mystery shrouding her birth might prove no impenetrable one, and that he verily believed he could be serviceable in promoting a discovery. That very day's post carried out towards Croxton the following reply from Mr. Ballow:—

"Minchley, 20th August, 1856.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Your letter needed no apology at all, inasmuch as we consider every person who takes an interest in our beloved Eva as establishing a very strong claim on our gratitude and regard. And permit me to say that, in name at least, you are by no means the stranger to us which you may suppose yourself. Mrs. Ballow and I were present when you purchased at Gravelling Castle that portrait of which you speak. Years before we had noticed (when looking over the castle) that extraordinary likeness to our dear young friend. And ever on the watch for something which might dissipate the doubt encompassing her birth, we wished to see the picture again, and, if possible, to ascertain something more about the original. I may tell you now, without much fear of giving you offence, that we longed to inquire into *your* reasons for buying that portrait, and that your name has very often been in our thoughts during the last four or five weeks. I send herewith the important paper (a copy of it, that is) which was left in our hands by Mr. Ferrier, Eva's self-appointed guardian, and the uncle by marriage of my wife. I also send you a clue to names and places, exactly as they were known to Mr. Ferrier himself.

"How *Mrs. Ferrier* (Mr. F.'s sister-in-law) obtained her clue to the

name of Roberts I never could ascertain. Nor will I offer any comment on *her* proceedings. I shall wait impatiently (I had almost said) for a further communication from you, and remain,

"Yours ever faithfully,

"FREDERICK BALLOW."

This Mr. Dykhart received on the Thursday. That very afternoon he went out, not on horseback, but in his gig, to Marlby. He took along with him the portrait of Miss Somerby.

"If," he said to Mrs. Campion—"if I had not already written about it to Lord Fitzadam, it should be yours instead."

"I could not have taken it from *him*. If you will leave it with me for a day or two, I should be glad to sketch a copy of it."

"That you may be sure I will. Can you return it on Monday? We think, as you say you will be quite ready for him, of sending poor Elwood here on that day. And I shall accompany or precede them in my gig."

Mrs. Campion said she was sure of completing her sketch before that day. And Mr. Dykhart spoke again, but on another subject.

"Adela," he said, "can you trust me?"

"I *have* trusted you, dear Mr. Dykhart. I do not mean in confessing my identity to you. That I might not have been able to conceal. But in what I told you on Monday, as to my sorrows and troubles."

"You confide in my honour, I very well know. But can you as thoroughly trust in my prudence?"

"I could, I feel sure. But if you mean to say, Can I tell you *all*, I dare not say Yes. I hesitate, not from any manner of doubt as to yourself, but because it was my husband's wish to keep the matter secret."

"That, Adela, I think I know. Nor do I ask you to disregard his wish. But I had a strong persuasion, when I saw you on Monday, that there was much in the matter which has been kept secret—most wrongfully kept secret—from you yourself. I cannot now explain to you how immensely certain circumstances have increased that belief in me since. I remember your saying that, when once you wrote, entreating some intercourse with your daughter, you got a letter from Mr. Campion, somewhat strangely worded, only forbidding that intercourse as a thing unreasonable to ask."

"Yes, that is exactly what I did say, and what occurred."

"Should you be transgressing the rule you have laid down for yourself if you permitted me to see that letter, or even to take a copy of it? Believe me, it shall be discreetly used if at all."

Mrs. Campion considered for just one moment.

"I think," she said, "I may do that. There is no direct allusion to my great error in it."

And within a few minutes the letter was fetched and laid before Mr. Dykhart. It was short—very short, and his labour was quickly finished. He did not stop now to analyze the few words; that would be a task for a time of greater leisure. Then he again quitted Marlby.

On the following Monday, the 25th of August, poor Issachar Elwood was removed to the Home for the Helpless at Marlby. His mother overflowed with gratitude. And when the vicar promised her that, either by himself or at his expense, she should be conveyed to the asylum once a fortnight on a visit, her only remnant of objection was taken away, and she thanked Mr. Dykhart in a manner which—from causes known to ourselves and to him—was much more painful than pleasing to him. That evening he finally packed up the portrait which he had brought away with him from Marlby, and, with its case amongst his luggage, he started for town the very next morning.

Of course that portrait was not the occasion of his journey to London. But its living counterpart was so. There was to be a great congress held in London about Eva and the affairs which had mingled themselves up with her. First, there was to be a partition treaty as to Mr. Gryffyth's estate. We may come to the results at once. Mr. Leyburn surrendered the Llanbadder estate, a property on the sea-coast, and likely soon to be valuable building ground, to his reverend brother and our esteemed friend, Mr. Dowlas. And the first intimation which he received of Eva's non-relationship with him was accompanied by the news of his own enrichment in this way. The estate of Tyn-y-cwrw was charged with a life annuity of two hundred pounds for poor Mrs. Roberts. She did not continue in Tremallyoc House, but a very nice cottage in the same place was accorded (rent free) to her use. I am sorry to say she was forced to part with those beautiful cups and saucers which had filled her with so much exultant satisfaction over her sister's less beautiful crockery. All these arrangements (it is of some importance to tell you) were not completed, nor made known to those who were to benefit by them, until nearly the middle of September. But they were settled in effect before August was over by Mr. Leyburn, his lawyer, Mr. Ballow, Eva, and the Welsh lawyer. Both Mr. Ballow and Mr. Dykhart were far more interested in renewing the search after Eva's real parentage.

On Friday, the 29th of August, there was much of serious discussion between them, and while part of the still existing mystery did really appear to diminish, there were things which defied penetration as boldly as ever. But it will be the fairest course to place the interview and its immediate results in full before the reader.

Its remoter consequences were at once more terrible in their passing evil, and more fruitful in ultimate good.

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

I CONFESS to feeling some scruple in writing this paper. I may be raising doubts in the minds of many as to the integrity of a character which they have ever been taught to regard as unblemished.

The charge is a serious one—a very fearful one indeed; and made, too, against one entitled by his misfortunes to our veneration and pity.

The pious and ill-fated monarch, Louis XVI., is he who stands at the bar, and he is charged with *poisoning*.

Whether this charge be true or false will probably never be known. It may be remembered that the discovery of an iron secret chest in the Tuileries, and the papers which it contained, were the primary grounds of the accusation of Louis XVI. The discovery of this chest was due to a locksmith, François Gamain, who had made it for the King. It was this man who was thus the means of bringing the unhappy monarch to the guillotine;—it was he, moreover, who, a little later, obtained a decree of Convention, pronouncing the King guilty of an attempt at murder.

In 1794 François Gamain presented a petition to the Assemblée through Musset, an ex-priest and a furious democrat, member for La Vendée. Musset's speech and the reading of the petition produced a profound sensation in the Assembly, a sensation of unbounded surprise and horror.

"It was nothing," began Musset, "for the last of our tyrants to have been the cause of two thousand of our citizens perishing beneath the swords of the enemy; you will see, by the petition in my hand, that he had familiarized himself with cruelty more refined, and that he had himself administered poison to the father of a family, hoping thereby to bury in oblivion one of his perfidious manœuvres; you will see with what a bloodthirsty soul he had adopted the maxim, that everything is lawful to kings if they can but carry through their criminal designs. This is the petition which it is my honour to present before you:—

"François Gamain, locksmith to the cabinets and workshops of the late King, and for three years member of the council-general of the commune of Versailles, declares that, in the beginning of May, 1792, he received orders to come to Paris. Scarcely had he arrived, before Capet required him to fix a cupboard in the depth of the walls of his apartment, and to close it with an iron door: operation completed on the 22nd of the same month. No sooner was the business done than Capet with his own hands brought to the citizen Gamain a large tumbler of wine, which he begged him to drink, as he was very hot. Some hours after that he had drunk this wine he was attacked by a violent colic, which only left him when he had swallowed two spoonfuls of elixir, which made him eject all that he had eaten and drunk during the day. A frightful malady ensued, which lasted fourteen months, during which time he lost the use

of his limbs, and his health has never been sufficiently restored to permit of his attending to his business and providing for the necessities of his family.'

"Such, citizens, is a plain statement of the facts which he takes the liberty of presenting to your notice: they are accompanied by the certificate of the medical men who have attended him. He would also bring to your remembrance the fact that, though entirely ignorant of the purpose for which the cabinet had been designed by Capet, he had given information which led to its discovery, and to that of the interesting passages which it contained. He entreats of you, legislators, to decree to him a pension suitable to his twenty-six years of service and the sacrifices which he has made; and his hope is founded on the broken condition of his health, which allows him no means of procuring a subsistence."

Ten days later, on the 28 Floréal, Peyssard, deputy for the Dordogne, a vehement partisan of Robespierre, read his report on the petition in behalf of the committee to which it had been referred for consideration.

"Before the tribunal of liberty are registered the crimes of the oppressors of the human race! To paint a king in all his hideousness I shall not have recourse to ancient history, nor to the lengthened horrors of which the shattered monarchy presents a fearful chain: I shall but grasp it at its last link. I shall but name Louis XVI., and in this name all crimes are contained; it recalls a monster of iniquity and perfidy to our memories. Scarcely had he escaped from infancy, before the germ of this ferocious obliquity, which is a characteristic mark of a tyrant, began to develop itself. His earliest sports were sports of blood! and his brutality increased from day to day; he delighted in satiating it upon every animal which came in his way. One well knows what this apprenticeship led to; one knows how the pages of the Revolution drip with blood poured forth by his murderous hands (! !); but this last touch of barbarity was unknown." Poor Louis, spending his youth in the workshops, making little locks and keys, with a heart as tender as a woman's, and a mind, if commonplace, yet certainly not cruel, is this your portrait? But to continue. "He was known to be cruel, a traitor, an assassin. The object of this Report is to exhibit him before the whole of France, presenting, with the utmost *sang-froid*, a glass of poisoned wine to a luckless mechanic whom he had just done employing in the construction of a cabinet destined to conceal the intrigues of tyranny. Think you that this monster cast his eyes on some stranger to be his victim? Not so; he selected his confidential servant, a father of a family, whom he assassinates with an air of solicitude and cordiality. . . . A violent emetic preserved Gamain to his family. His first care was to point out the well-known iron chest. He fulfilled his duty. Now, crippled in all his limbs by these effects of the royal poison, he demands of the founders of the Republic means to support his painful existence. From that tribune whence issued the decree of death to the tyrant should issue also th-

remedies to the misfortunes caused by him, and relief to the victims of his atrocity.

"Your committee have charged me with presenting the following decision for your approval :—

"'Art. 1. That François Gamain, poisoned by Louis Capet the 22nd May, 1792 (old style), shall during his lifetime enjoy an annual pension of the sum of 1,200 livres, reckoning from the day of the poisoning.

"'Art. 2. That the present decree be inserted in the Minutes.'"

This decree was carried by acclamation, and was inserted in the Minutes, *but without any of the evidence* upon which it was founded. Gamain's petition and the medical certificates have all disappeared. How, and when? Even the volume of the *Moniteur* for 1794, which contains the motion of Musset and the report of Peyssard, has been withdrawn from the Bibliothèque Royale.

No one, I presume, would put any confidence in this decision of the National Assembly, remembering the state of feeling at the time. Any accusation by which the name of the poor King might be blackened would be listened to with eagerness, and the proofs upon which it was founded would not be looked into too curiously. How the documents perished it is difficult to tell. Were they suppressed at the time as being of too flimsy a nature to make it well that they should be preserved, or were they destroyed at the Restoration?

Gamain survived the Republic, and died at the age of fifty-eight, in the year 1800, at his house in Versailles. There he was well known to the frequenters of the parks, who regarded him with feelings of mingled pity and aversion. They remembered him as an old man bent nearly double, supporting himself on a stick, his cheeks sunken, and his complexion cadaverous; his head bald, with only a few tufts of white hair still left to garnish it; his brow deeply wrinkled, his lips drawn in upon his toothless gums, and his eyes sparkling with a dull fire which flashed into a gleam of malignity and hatred at the mention of the name of Louis XVI. He used to spend his evenings in a Versailles *café*, in company with two old notaries and the doctor M. Lamairin, who attended on him from the day of his poisoning. These three were witnesses to the truth of his having been actually poisoned; but how that took place was only known on the bare assertion of Gamain himself. His air of veracity and of distress, his earnest voice, his countenance expressive of his sufferings, his flashing eyes, his vehement gestures—when he related his pathetic story—were all so many guarantees of good faith to the listener.

His narrative has fortunately been preserved, taken down from his own lips, by the eminent antiquary and historian, M. Jules Lacroix. It is as follows :—

"After the attack on the castle of Versailles, as I was living in the town near my workshop, I seldom saw the King, but waited till he sent

for me to the Tuileries, where he then was. After his attempted flight in 1791, which unfortunately failed, I saw no more of him. After he had been brought back to Paris from Varennes, I should have compromised myself had I gone often to the Tuileries; besides, the King doubtless had other things to attend to besides lockmaking. My relations with the King in teaching him my trade had already caused some inconvenience, and my enemies had already tried to turn them to account against me. . . . On the 21st May, 1792, whilst I was engaged at my shop, a man on horseback stopped at my door and called to me by name. The disguise of this man, dressed as he was like a waggoner, did not prevent me from recognizing Durey, whom the King had taken as assistant at the forge. 'M. Gamain,' quoth he, 'his Majesty sends me to demand your presence at the *château*. Enter by the kitchens, so as not to cause suspicions.' 'I'm sorry to say I can't go, Durey,' replied I. 'If I were to leave Versailles it would at once render me suspected, and draw down misfortune upon my head.'

"Durey tried in vain to persuade me that it was my duty to obey the King. I laughed at his remonstrances, and said that his Majesty knew the locksmith's trade well enough not to need my help or that of any man. I had a presentiment of misfortune. Durey departed much vexed at the ill-success of his mission. Three hours later he returned to entreat me to fulfil the King's pleasure. He said nothing about orders, but his change of tone failed to seduce me. I still obstinately refused.

"I now believed myself delivered from the importunities of Durey, and I congratulated myself on having resisted, when the news reached Versailles that the mob were attacking the Tuileries that very evening—a mistaken rumour, for this did not take place till the following month.

"On the morrow I was astonished and annoyed to see Durey reappear, this time with an autograph letter from the King, urging me, in an amicable tone, to come and help him in a troublesome piece of work upon which he was engaged. My pride was flattered at this special invitation. I dressed hastily; I kissed my wife and children, without telling them whither I was going; I simply promised to be back at nightfall. Durey conducted me to the Tuileries, where the King was guarded as though he were in prison. We entered by the private way, and betook ourselves to the King's workshop, where Durey left me to announce my arrival. Whilst I was alone I remarked an iron door lately forged; a 'benarde' lock, very skilfully executed; and a little iron casket, with a secret spring, which I could not make out at first sight. Presently Durey returned with the King. 'Ah, my poor Gamain,' said Louis XVI., touching my shoulder and smiling benevolently, 'we have not met for a long while.' 'Yes, sire,' I replied, 'I am sorry for it; but out of prudence towards yourself as well as me I have been obliged to suspend my visits, which were misunderstood. That's the reason, sire, why I did not obey your orders.' 'Alas! the times are very bad, and how things will

end I know not!’ exclaimed the King; and then he added in a cheerful tone, whilst pointing out to me the metal work which I had examined, ‘What say you to my handiwork? I did this all myself in less than ten days. I am your apprentice, Gamain!’ I thanked the King for the compliment, and I asked him what I could do for him, with great protestations of devotion and fidelity. Then the King said he always had had confidence in me, and that he had no hesitation in putting into my hands the fate of himself and his family. Thereupon he conducted me into his bedroom, and thence into the gloomy passage which connects it with the Dauphin’s room. Durey had lighted a candle; and he raised, by the King’s command, a panel of the woodwork, behind which I perceived a cavity made in the wall, scarcely two feet wide at the opening. The King told me that he had made this secret place in which to hide his money, and that Durey, who had helped him to break away the wall, had thrown the rubbish into the river at intervals during the night. The King then told me that he wished to fasten the iron door into the opening, and that he did not know how this was to be effected. This was what he required of me. I set to work at once. I examined all the parts of the lock, which did not act perfectly. I made the key at the forge in such a manner that it should not resemble other keys. Then I fixed the hinges by rivets into the masonry as firmly as possible without making too much noise. The King assisted me to the best of his powers. Every moment he was begging me to hammer more softly or to be more expeditious: he was afraid of being surprised by some prying person whilst engaged upon the work, which lasted all day. The key was put in the little iron casket, and this casket was concealed under a slab at the end of the corridor. There was no necessity for a key to fasten the cabinet, for the bolts and rollers acted of themselves when the iron door was moved on its hinges.

“I had been at work for eight hours without cessation—perspiration rolled from my forehead in large drops—I was impatient for rest; and I felt exhaustion from hunger, for I had not touched a morsel of any sort since I had risen. I sat down for a minute in the King’s chamber, and he himself brought me a chair, apologizing for the trouble which he had given me. He then asked me to help him in counting two millions of double Louis, which we were to put into four leather sacks.”

“Whilst I, out of complaisance, did this counting, which was not in the line of my trade one whit, I saw Durey conveying bundles of papers to the secret cabinet, and I guessed at once that the money was only a pretext for drawing off my attention. I am positive that the papers alone were hidden there. The King proposed that I should sup at the *château* before I left, but I refused with a feeling of pride, lest I should be sent to eat with valets; besides, I was anxious to return to my wife and children. I did not either accept the offer of some one to accompany me to Versailles. I did not care to be seen in company with one in the King’s

livery, and I mistrusted Durey. Why did they dissemble from me the true use of the iron chest?

"Just as I was on the point of withdrawing, the Queen entered suddenly by a masked door which was at the foot of the King's bed. She had in her hand a plate with a 'brioche' cake on it, and a glass of wine. She stepped up to me as I saluted her with astonishment, for Louis XVI. had assured me that the Queen knew nothing of the fabrication of the cabinet. 'My dear Gamain,' said she, in a caressing tone, 'you seem hot, my friend; drink the glass of wine and eat this cake; that will support you during your walk.' I thanked her, quite overwhelmed at this consideration for a poor workman like me, and I emptied the glass to her health. She let me put on my cravat and coat, which I had laid aside in order that I might work more at my ease.

"The cake remained on the plate, which the Queen had laid on one of the tables; and I slipped it into my pocket, as the King took leave of me, intending to bring it home to my children.

"I left the Tuileries as night set in; it was about eight o'clock. I was in such haste to arrive at Versailles, and to embrace my wife and children; I was so anxious to allay their fears at my protracted absence, that I did not choose to enter a *café* to get any food, though I much needed some. I calculated on deriving support for my walk of four leagues from the glass of wine which I owed to the inexplicable foresight of the Queen. I walked on at a good pace through the Champs Elysées, taking the *chaussée* on the water-side, where neither carriages nor foot travellers were to be met with at that time, on account of the uncertainty of things, though once it had been much frequented. Suddenly I was seized with a general qualm, which, however, did not prevent me from pursuing my course; but these vague symptoms of sudden indisposition became more pronounced by agonizing internal pains, nervous spasms, and a burning sensation in the intestines. I was ignorant of the cause or character of a complaint, the preliminary symptoms of which caused such torture, and I sank gasping at the foot of a tree. I believed myself to be lost, and I attributed it to an attack of apoplexy. My sight left me, I heard with difficulty, I felt an intolerable heat pervade my whole body, accompanied by frightful colic, which made me writhe, screaming and weeping on the ground. I caught a glimpse of people passing in the distance, and of carriages. I shrieked for help, but no one came near me. I crept on hands and knees through the mud towards the river, as I was parched with thirst, caused by the internal fire which was consuming me. The efforts which I made led, perhaps, to a favourable crisis. I was relieved after vomitings, which seemed to bring me to death's door, causing, as they did, such intense internal tortures. At intervals I uttered piercing cries, and my moans were incessant. Thus passed an hour of anguish. Finally, as I felt myself recovering, the sound of a carriage approaching reached my ears.

"I struggled forward on hands and knees, and crawled into the middle of the road, where I might be either run over or saved. I trembled lest the carriage should change its course, for if so, I should have to spend the night on the ground, and on the morrow I should be found dead. I endeavoured to attract the attention of the people in the carriage by my lamentations. This expedient succeeded: a man looked out of the window, and seeing something moving in the dusk he supposed it to be a drunkard who had fallen, and he ordered the driver to draw up, so as to avoid an accident. At the same time this man jumped out of the vehicle, in which he had been alone, and came to me asking whether I was wounded; but I could not reply, a fresh access of pain having come on, which took away my breath, and I fainted in the arms of my preserver. This stranger made the driver get down and bring the carriage lantern, to examine me and ascertain what assistance was needed. He fancied that I had been assassinated, and that I had just expired, as I spoke no longer; but he was reassured by finding that my pulse still beat, though feebly. He turned the light upon me, and endeavoured to learn what my condition really was.

"The moment that he saw my face he recognized me as one whom he had seen at Versailles, in the King's workroom, when I was teaching the art of lockmaking to Louis XVI. By chance, in my misfortune, I had met with a man who was under certain obligations to me, and who would, on this account, take an interest in me in my then condition. He was an English medical man, of eccentric habits, but generous and humane, as the event proves. In one of his tours in France, before the Revolution of '89, he had addressed himself to me to obtain admission to the workshop of Louis XVI., and to see a peculiar lock of ingenious mechanism, which my pupil had constructed. I did him the required favour, and, what is more, I made him a present of a lock forged by the King's own hands. This Englishman, as I learned from his own mouth, had settled in Paris that he might have the gratification, he said, of witnessing the birth of a mighty revolution.

"The moment that I opened my eyes the Englishman told me who he was, and inquired into the accident which had befallen me. I did not tell him how I had spent my day at the Tuileries, but I pretended that my sickness was the result of excessive fatigue on an empty stomach.

"The Englishman reflected a moment, felt my pulse again, looked intently at my livid countenance, touched my burning chest, and asked me bluntly whether I had not been poisoned. This was to me a gleam of unexpected light, by which I saw what might be the motives which would require that one possessing a State secret should be got rid of. This idea no more quitted me, though I had the discretion to keep it to myself.

"The Englishman conveyed me into his carriage, and ordered the driver to hurry to the next chemist's shop. I tried to object, and to get carried to Versailles at once; but the Englishman, who saw that the

danger was pressing, paid no attention to my entreaties. I was so weak, so exhausted by my sufferings, and especially by what I had suffered, that I no more resisted the determination of my guide, to whom, indeed, I owe my life.

"The vehicle stopped before a chemist's shop in the Rue du Bac. The Englishman left me alone whilst he prepared for me an elixir, the effects of which would be that it should counteract the poison I had swallowed. After having drunk this I threw up what remained of the poison. An hour later, and nothing could have saved me.

"I recovered in part my hearing and my sight. The cold which circulated in my veins was gradually dispelled, and the Englishman judged at last that I was in a condition to be removed to Versailles.

"We reached home at two o'clock in the morning. My wife was in fits. Her despair was manifested by her sobs when she saw me return half dead, wrapped up in a cloak like a winding-sheet, and to all appearances a corpse. The doctor, M. de Lamairin, and the surgeon, M. Voisin, were called in. They arrived at once, and agreed that the signs were unequivocally those of poison. I was questioned, but I would not answer. The Englishman left me, with the assurance that I should not die this time. He often returned during my convalescence. MM. de Lamairin and Voisin spent the night at my side. At the end of three days of fever, delirium, and inconceivable pains, I got the better of the poison, but not without undergoing terrible consequences. I have never quite recovered from an almost complete paralysis. My head has been subject to neuralgia, and my digestive organs to a general inflammatory condition, to which I shall ever be subject.

"Not only did I persist in concealing the fact of my visit to the Tuileries on the 22nd May, but I also besought the Englishman not to spread abroad the account of our nocturnal meeting in the Champs Elysées, and I demanded of the doctor and the surgeon to exercise the same discretion. I had no news of Louis XVI.; and, notwithstanding the resentment which rankled in my soul against the supposed authors of this deed of treachery, I did not avow to my wife that I had been poisoned. However, the truth came out one day, in spite of me.

"Some while after the catastrophe, the servant maid, in cleaning my coat, found in the pocket a handkerchief covered with black stains, and a crushed and flattened *brioche*, which days of neglect had made as hard as a stone. The girl took a bite of the cake, and flung the rest into the court. The dog ate the bit of pastry and died; the girl, who had only taken a morsel, fell dangerously ill. The dog was opened by M. Voisin. The presence of poison was ascertained; and a chemical analysis discovered traces of poison in the handkerchief which had been marked by my vomitings. In the cake alone there was enough corrosive sublimate to kill ten persons.

"At last, then, I had all the evidence I required. I was convinced

of the poisoning, if not of *who* were my poisoners! I thirsted for revenge. I feared lest I should die before the opportunity presented itself. I remained deprived of the use of my limbs during five months. It was only on the 19th November that I was in condition to come to Paris.

"I betook myself to the minister Roland, who received me at once on hearing the announcement that I had an important secret to confide to him. I informed him of the existence of the 'iron cabinet,' and I refused the recompence he offered in the name of the Convention. Revenge was all that sufficed me.

"On the morrow the cabinet was discovered, the papers which it contained were placed in the bureau of the Convention, and Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette were brought to the scaffold."

Thus ends Gamain's horrible story. I cannot let it go forth without adding a few remarks to qualify it. And here I may state, once for all, that I do not for one moment believe that Louis XVI., far less Marie-Antoinette, was guilty of such a fearful crime.

Not only is such an act foreign to what we know of their natures and characters, but there are circumstances in Gamain's story which of themselves are calculated to arouse our suspicion. Gamain, when he told the secret of the iron cabinet, never alluded to his poisoning; it was not till two years later that he brought the story before Convention, and not till those whom he accused were dead.

Gamain, moreover, was known to have been a favourite of the King, and to have profited largely by the royal patronage. His act of treachery in discovering his master's secret papers to his bitterest enemies, and in being thus a means of bringing him to his execution, must have aroused the indignation of many. His act could only be regarded as one of the basest ingratitude. The story of the poisoning served to clear him of this imputation. Nay, more, it served to bring him in a pension of 1,200 livres per annum.

The accusation was worth that price to the leaders of the Revolution, and the evidence was certain to be dealt very tenderly with.

Again, Gamain's story in 1800 differed materially from that in 1794. In his petition the locksmith expressly stated that the King had given him the glass of wine with his own hand. In his account taken down by M. Lacroix, the Queen plays a prominent part, and is the person who actually poisoned him.

Some of the details of the narrative are also suspicious. The opportune arrival of the English medical man who was under obligations to Gamain is very suspicious. We read of these coincidences in novels, but not in real life. How is it that the Englishman's name is not given? How, too, could this person succeed in passing the *barrières* at night, conveying the sick man to Versailles? The incident of the cake and the dog is much like what we find in story-books, and is also open to question. However, it is not improbable that Gamain may have had a severe illness,

precipitated by the fatigues of the day, and perhaps by something which he may have eaten or drunk at the palace, and which disagreed with him, and this may have served as a groundwork for his story.

It is certainly very remarkable that the all-important point of the presentation of the poisoned wine is just the very point on which he contradicts himself; and it is curious that at the end of his days Gamain always avoided answering a question point-blank, "Was it the King or Queen who poisoned you?" He never would say, "I *was* poisoned by the King;" but he would reply, "I will tell you my story—draw your own inferences."

S. BARING GOULD, M.A.

TO THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY.

WHILE German and foreign hotel-keepers generally will have cause to look back upon the summer of 1866 as an evil one for them, those nearer home will, we imagine, have about equal reason to remember it with gratitude. Without pretending to solve the enigma as to where all the regular tourists have this year found place to disport themselves, certain it is that they have gone somewhere, and that that somewhere is not abroad. One has only to walk about London to realize the fact that it is deserted, and to look for his regular acquaintances to find that they have flown; one has only to read reports from the German watering-places to learn that they are not there, and to collect statistics from Dover and Folkestone to find that the foreign exodus has this year been considerably below the average. Evidently, then, they have determined to make the best of what they may consider a bad business, and are contenting themselves with those beauties of their native isles with which they had previously been unfamiliar.

Such has been, at all events, our own case this year; and, as is common to poor humanity, we are naturally inclined to consider our case that also of the majority: neither the Alps nor the Pyrenees, neither Homburg nor Wiesbaden, has seduced us this time from our native shores, nor have we sought relaxation in any other lands than those included within the bounds of the United Kingdom. Yet we affirm that we have spent our holiday well, and that we have seen sights and heard sounds at once novel, interesting, and repaying; that we have been amongst a strange and a romantic people, and that we have seen natural beauties such as are of their kind unsurpassed. We have, in fine, gone from London to the Lakes of Killarney and back again; we have paid flying visits to those terrible places the counties Cork and Tipperary, and are still alive to tell the tale, and are in fact absolutely going to do so.

That is an anxious time to the modern Briton—meaning, of course, the conventional type of the modern Briton, the hard-worked office or city man—when the period arrives for him to decide where his well-earned holiday is to be spent; that is a time for deep reflection and nice and thoughtful calculation. Formerly it was not a matter so difficult of decision; Margate or Boulogne, or at the farthest Paris or Brussels, was open to him; or, if his purse was full, he had the everlasting Rhine: no one troubled himself very much about his comfort, but if he could pay his way he was welcome, and if he could not he had better stay at home. But how greatly is all that changed now! Where is the bewildered tourist to turn in these days? how amid the multiplicity of allurements to decide? His outgoings and his incomings are watched with the utmost eagerness; railway companies and even private individuals are down upon him on all sides, and he scarcely any longer has a free choice. No matter whither he would go,

everything is provided for him and for his convenience, and so many and such convenient tours are provided that he is kept in a continued state of agitation and indecision as to which is best. How can he determine upon one without spiting himself in not determining upon another? what selection can he make that will not be invidious, and that he may not afterwards repent? Scarce a newspaper he takes up but is full of the most tempting invitations; at every turn he makes in the street, offers, cruelly generous stare him in the face. Time-books of railways at the nominal price of one penny bestrew his path, which are very libraries in themselves, and within these, pages of divers hues lure him to divers projects alike desirable, feasible, and considerate. Even if he escapes all these, and steers clear, moreover, of advertisements, handbills, and the like seductive engines, it is still an even chance if he is not carried off bodily to Rome or America by Mr. Cook, or deposited somewhere somehow by one of Marcus's excursion trains. To any, then, still in the pangs of deliberation, and to any who may hereafter be so, we have a suggestion to make, which we make in all humility, but also with becoming confidence in its value and good intentions. It is that they should proceed to Euston Square station, as we did; that they should there provide themselves with an excursion ticket to Killarney, as we did also; in which case they will have an opportunity of repeating those experiences which we now proceed to describe.

By this time we suppose it may be assumed as an axiom in practical physics that all well-conducted railway journeys are pretty much alike, and certainly that by the night mail from London to Holyhead has every reason to rank high among such. A continuous run of forty miles an hour for seven hours, broken only by three short stoppages, is decidedly not bad going, and we very much doubt if it can anywhere be surpassed. Nevertheless it must be confessed that it is not an agreeable seven hours' work; journeys in trains, indeed, as at present constructed, very seldom are; railway reformers have not yet hit upon a mode of making them so, and the original architects of lines appear to have been guided but by one principle—the economizing of space. You get into a species of stuffed tube called a carriage, in which there is just room for a man of ordinary stature to stand upright, and which is already tenanted by five other individuals and an indefinite number of railway wrappers, travelling rugs, hat-cases, and portmanteaux, and you are deposited upon a particular cushion, in a particular position, and in a sort of cavity formed for your reception. Once safely lodged in this receptacle, or compartment, or whatever is the correct term, you are a fixture, the limits of your own peculiar territory being rigidly indicated by protuberances reaching up along the region of your ribs and far above your head; an outlet is provided certainly for your elbows, and a space which you are supposed to share with your next neighbour, but which, not admitting of two different elbows reposing upon it at the same time, forms usually a kind of debatable territory between you and 'him, which you take and retake in turn, to be ousted again as

occasion offers. There is no possibility of your stretching your legs, except over the lap of the individual opposite, as a trunk, or a gun-case, or a roll of coats, or a fishing-basket, is inevitably so disposed as to prevent your getting them beneath his seat. He, upon his part, is in all probability justly incensed at your endeavours to do so, and is calculating how much damage has been done to the object of your assault, while you are simply treating it as an obstruction. If there are ladies in the carriage you are afraid to go to sleep lest you should snore, or exhibit your countenance in an undignified aspect, as those are liable to do who sleep with their mouths open; while if there are not ladies you are probably smoked dry before you have gone the first twenty miles, and half suffocated before you have gone the next forty. At Stafford there is sure to be some one who insists upon getting out "to stretch his legs," thereby letting in a draught of cold air upon yours; and at Chester and Crewe the dose is liberally repeated. At Chester you are probably seduced into doing the same thing yourself, and having taken no particular note of which carriage was yours, go wandering about the immense station in a condition of hopeless bewilderment and distress. And then comes on the chill damp of the early morning air, and you distinctly feel that you are to have no bed that night; finally, at three o'clock or thereabouts you arrive at Holyhead, and are embarked, in a semi-drowsy, wholly unhappy frame of mind, upon a large steamer, and almost before you know where you are, are out to sea.

The Irish mail boats, *Ulster*, *Leinster*, *Connaught*, and *Munster*, which ply between Kingstown and Holyhead, are certainly by far the finest of any upon the home service, and may almost compare upon equal terms with the great American steamers between Liverpool and New York. Their average rate of speed is over fifteen miles an hour, and they can if necessary go almost twice as fast. Their fittings are of the most costly and substantial character, and they are commodious and convenient beyond all precedent. To stand upon the deck of one of these fine vessels as she is entering Dublin Bay upon a fine morning is a treat of no ordinary nature. The mere fact of rushing through the water and the clear light air, at a speed which a very few years ago would have been considered fabulous, is enlivening and exhilarating, as rapid motion more or less always is, and the view in front is one of real beauty. Upon the right is the sloping, graceful outline of the Hill of Howth, rising direct from the water; and upon the left the bay is completed by Bray Head, with the Dublin and Wicklow mountains far inshore forming the background of the landscape. All the coast from Kingstown to Bray is visible,—a beautiful coast, hilly, wooded, and various; and studded with bright, fresh-looking towns and elegant and ornamented private residences. The material of which almost all the houses in this neighbourhood are built is granite, which doubtless it is that gives it that new, handsome, luxurious look which is one of its most marked characteristics. A short

distance more, and the pretty little harbour of Kingstown stretches its two long, stony arms to meet you. Rapidly do you glide between the piers and alongside the railway wharf. A train is here already drawn up in readiness to meet you, and in twenty minutes more you are in Dublin.

The chief sensation which a stranger is likely to experience upon landing in Ireland for the first time, by way of Kingstown, is that of agreeable disappointment. He has come over full of the tales of Ireland's wrongs and Ireland's woes, and picturing to himself a half-starved, discontented peasantry, and a rugged, inhospitable shore. He has heard of the condition of Ireland at all only through the medium of newspaper reports; of now an agrarian outrage, now an occasional faction fight, now a Fenian or a Ribbon conspiracy, or now an attack of periodical famine, and he looks with amazement upon the gay and brilliant panorama that meets his view, instead of the bleak and dismal one which he had so confidently anticipated. He is disgusted to find himself met by ruddy and well-fed natives, and is wholly unprepared for correctly got up porters and trim railway officials. His mind is sorely puzzled to account for the absence of squalor and destitution which he observes, and his confidence in the accuracy of the descriptions of Ireland which he has read is sorely shaken, when he finds that the steamer upon touching land is not immediately boarded by a number of bare-legged mountain lasses, and that there is neither a jig nor a shillelagh fight taking place upon the nearest available spot on shore. Still further is he shocked by the decided prevalence of English costume about him, and the entire absence of grey stockings, knee-breeches, and broken hats, with which, in connection also with the features of Mr. Dion Bouicault and Mr. Barney Williams, he has invariably associated the idea of the Irishman proper. As he steams on towards Dublin he is likely to be still further disconcerted. Where are the hovels of which he has heard so much?—the little mud cabins with a hole in the top for a chimney, and a hole in the side for a hall door? What he sees here are nothing but handsome and well-built rows of houses, crescents, and terraces of solid stone. Where are the huts and the patches of potatoes? Where are the effects of long misgovernment and the causes of chronic discontent? The fact is that they are not to be seen just here; Dublin and its suburbs, especially its Kingstown suburbs, must not at all be accepted as characteristic specimens of Irish scenery. Deep in the far south and west all these sights enumerated may be seen, but not in the handsome and prosperous capital city, the direct road to London, and, therefore to the rest of the world. They are not imaginary tales that he has heard—these sad and stern ones,—though he may now think so; they are not the mere grumbings of an idle and discontented race; they are, alas! but too true,—tales of starvation, of suffering, and of abject wretchedness, such as have never yet found a parallel in the history of the civilized world.

Arrived in Dublin at the terminus of the Kingstown Railway, the traveller first fully realizes that he is in a foreign country and amongst a strange population. Sights and sounds now meet his senses with which in ordinary life he has been previously unfamiliar. He is now at length confronted by the real stage Irishman, in the shape of an outside car driver, and at once recognizes the type. His ears are saluted by the real uncompromising Irish brogue, and he is at first wholly unable to understand what any one is saying. Yes, there he is, brogues, battered hat, and all; the typical Irishman; the Irishman of books, plays, and paintings; tattered, slovenly, weather-beaten, and ungraceful, yet withal retaining something of an element of romance about him, that endears him, spite of himself, to the imagination. Strange that about this creature there should be this atmosphere of something like tenderness. Why is it so? It is not thus with the English type, nor yet the Scotch. John Bull is a beery, beefy sort of person; honest, no doubt, but somewhat obtrusively bluff and stolid, and wholly uninteresting. Sandy is either a bare-legged, bagpiping mountaineer, or a sharp and "canny" accountant or adventurer, and in none of these characters does he much enlist our sympathies. But Pat!—there is something even in the very name more musical than the others,—Pat seems always to be doing something that has either a little of poetry or a little of humour about it; and even his follies and his very crimes are the crimes and follies of impulse, and not of calculating wickedness. The type of the Englishman we have seen exaggerated in fiction, and so the type of the Scotchman, but the type of the Irishman never; it is incapable of exaggeration; the most facetious sayings and the most fantastic deeds are only what he naturally and invariably says and does; he is still to a great extent the child of nature, and our English civilization has never yet really reached him, has never certainly yet overshadowed him. We doubt much if it ever will. It has failed to reach the New Zealander and the North American Indian; it has conquered them and has crushed them; they are fast dying out from off the earth. Can it be that that is destined to be the fate of the Irishman also? Let us remember that it is we who are unnatural—in the colloquial sense of nature,—and not they; it is we who live in factories and workshops, and reduce ourselves to machines; it is they to whom the fresh air and the open fields are the breath of life, to whom repose is a more natural state than labour, who cannot understand us, as we cannot them. The new state must supersede the old, for it is the stronger; but they will not amalgamate, and the weaker must die. To this we have already made up our minds in the case of some portions of the human race. Is it that the Irishman is of a similar kind, and that he must go too? It is a dismal view to take of the great Irish question; we confess it is a dreadful and a dismal view; but are there not at least some analogies to bear it out? He *will* not work as we work; he will not in his own country be anything

but a patriot and a spendthrift. He is the fickle, imaginative, high-spirited Celt; he is not the stubborn, self-denying Anglo-Saxon. And because he is not, and because there is something non-material, sprightly, and mercurial about him—something that is chivalrous, and recalls a state of society younger and fresher than that in which we live, that is precisely why he is an object of pleasing curiosity to us, and we invest him with a covering of romance. So was it with the Hurog and the Mohican of the New World, only that they had more of dignity and less of wit and humour. Ireland is fast losing its native population. Is it not perhaps the only chance that remains to them of continuing their race upon the earth? In the history of the world, it is the mixed races that we find are generally uppermost. Among animals, we know that the breed deteriorates if it is not crossed. For hundreds of years the true Irish have intermarried solely among themselves, and they have not the vigour and the resolution for these iron days. Does there not seem something like a connection in all this? Is there not here at all events food for thought? Only, why will not our legislators take up the question in a philosophic and an earnest spirit? Why will they go on for ever repeating the same cruel errors, and adopting the same sad supercilious tone? We are great, but there are penalties attached to greatness; and there are also duties. Let us beware of the one, and let us try, let us for once honestly try, to fulfil the others.

But leaving our friend the Irish carman, or rather, conducted by him, let us now drive through the city, and down to the Kingsbridge terminus, on our way to Killarney Lakes. The passing glimpse we get of Dublin on our way reveals to us sights of much beauty and interest, only that we have not time to contemplate them at leisure. We drive through wide and handsome streets, and down long and well-built quays; we pass the Bank of Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin Castle, and the Courts of Law; the first and last among the finest buildings in Europe, the second and third rich in literary and historic associations. All this we accomplish accurately balanced upon the side of a jaunting car, retaining our equilibrium in a manner marvellous to ourselves, and continually escaping partial annihilation as to the shins by a miracle, and total annihilation as to the whole human form divine in the turning the corners of the streets. We arrive at the Kingsbridge terminus, a large and handsome station, and betake ourselves to the train once more. The line from Dublin to Killarney is a long one, extending I believe to over one hundred and eighty miles, which is quickly and punctually accomplished by the trains, save that there is a change of carriages at Mallow, and a pause of some twenty minutes for refreshment at a place called the Limerick Junction, being, as far as we could perceive, a species of shed erected in some fields far away from any habitation of man. The country through which you pass is various and characteristic, and some of the scenery, especially about this

Limerick Junction and between Mallow and Killarney, is striking and pretty. You pass respectively through portions of six counties, affording as good an opportunity as could be desired of seeing what the interior of Ireland is like. These counties are Dublin, Kildare, Queen's County, Tipperary, Cork, and Kerry; and in doing so you traverse for a considerable distance the celebrated Bog of Allan; passing Kildare you get a view of the ruins of a very fine old abbey, and also an Irish round tower, one of the most remarkable in Ireland; but there is very little else of interest until you leave Mallow. Soon after leaving Mallow, and when you are now on the direct Killarney line, you find yourself getting in among the mountains, and are soon surrounded upon every side. The views here are exceedingly picturesque and characteristic of Irish mountain scenery; everything is bold and bleak viewed generally, but relieved here and there by bits of intense softness and luxuriant verdure; you also find that you are now among the real native peasantry, who even to the present day look upon the train as a thing of awe and portent. By-and-bye you reach Killarney, and take up your abode, as we did, at the Railway Hotel, which is an establishment constructed and conducted on the largest and most liberal scale.

It forms no portion of our design to give an accurate description of the scenery and of the various interesting features of the Lakes of Killarney; all that has long since and often been done, far more ably than we could hope to do it, and may moreover be found repeated in the pages of any ordinary guide-book. We desire merely to record our own impressions of the place, impressions formed during a stay of not over five days' continuance, and therefore entirely personal and superficial. That there is a regular round of visits to pay and of things to see is a matter of course, and that that regular round we accomplished is, we believe, a matter of fact; and the manner of that accomplishment we shall give, not as a guide to others, but solely as a record of what occurred to us. Our first achievement, then, upon arriving at Killarney, as we have already described, was to stow ourselves away in a bedroom of the Railway Hotel, and our next—as far as recollection serves us—to rise for purposes of dressing upon the following morning. For some time previously our slumbers had been disturbed by strange grunting sounds beneath our window, and being unable to connect these with romantic scenery and “liquid mirrors,” &c., &c., it was with some curiosity that we drew up our curtains to gaze out upon the prospect, and to hurl our displeasure at the disturbing influences, whatever they might be. But what a prospect awaited us! All night long we had been dreaming of “sunny waves” and “golden sands” and “silver ripples,” and so forth; and what does the sympathizing reader suppose was fated to be our first view of Killarney? A pig fair! A deliberate and uncompromising pig fair was in progress beneath our very windows, and it was the unmusical chorus arising from it that had broken

in upon our rest. Here was a distracting episode. The Lakes of Killarney and pork! nay, live, grunting, struggling pork, too,—boars, sows, and little piggies—*bonyeens*, as a colossal farmer afterwards described them to us. Were there ever two ideas so dissimilar? We turned from that window, and addressed ourselves to the duties of the toilet, humbled and crushed, and feeling very much as if a personal insult had been offered to us: it seemed absolutely savage, if not actually spiteful, of the natives to hold a pig market upon the very day of our arrival! By the time breakfast was over we had, however, become somewhat calm after this incident, and were fortunate in joining a party who were going that day to ascend Mangerton. This Mangerton is a mountain some 2,700 feet high, and its ascent is one of the regular Killarney trips. Our ascent of Mangerton that day was, however, not a successful one: we believe it is rather exceptional when it ever is. As far as a lake or tarn, called the Devil's Punch-bowl, we accomplished our journey upon ponies most satisfactorily, but after that we got involved in a hopeless mist, the more hopeless the higher we ascended, till at length the farthest prospect one could obtain was as far as the ears of the quadruped he bestrode. Under these circumstances there was nothing for it but to return, for it is the view from Mangerton which is the only inducement to climb it; or at least it is the only inducement which we can conceive, for a bleaker and less interesting mountain we never saw. Return we did, and up to that moment we must confess that our impressions of Killarney were not favourable.

But the expedition of the next day well repaid us for all previous hardship and disappointment: the fact is, there is only one *great* day's expedition at Killarney; the others, though all beautiful, and in portions incomparably so, being wholly inferior and supplementary to it. This expedition is through the Gap of Dunloe and back by the three great lakes, which, with the surrounding scenery, include, in fact, the whole of the Lakes of Killarney proper. Under favourable auspices this is an excursion which, for beauty and variety, can scarcely be surpassed; it embraces, in fact, almost every kind of delightful and romantic scenery, and well merits a more detailed description than we shall be able to give it here. Starting, then, we will suppose from the Railway Hotel, the tourist first traverses the town of Killarney, which, though not the most imposing or savoury in the world, is nevertheless not wholly devoid of interest to him, as being perhaps as genuine a specimen of an Irish town as it would be possible to meet with anywhere throughout the land. As usual, it consists of one exceedingly long and excessively dirty street, with several offshoots more excessively dirty; three respectable-looking buildings—namely, the workhouse, the hospital, and the Roman Catholic church; and scores of wretched mud hovels and small drinking-houses. The population, of course, is lounging idly about the streets, the young men and women flirting and coquetting in the mud together, the old men

getting as rapidly drunk as possible, and the old women sitting at their own doors smoking short black clay pipes. A very different scene this from Dublin; here is the real Irish village, and here is the real old peasantry; a sad scene when we reflect upon the ever-increasing fierceness of "the struggle for existence," and the small desire, and, alas! the small capacity shown here to go armed into the fight. A sad scene, and a dispiriting, when we think of the fresh, clean, wholesome villages which our country can show, and how little either our example or our advice has as yet profited these unhappy and unfortunate people. Leaving now the town of Killarney, and proceeding in a northerly direction, a drive of about an hour and a half brings us to the entrance of the Gap, where the day's work begins in earnest. Here is situated the cottage of the far-famed Kate Kearney, the "glance of whose eye" was capable of achieving such momentous feats; and here does a degenerate specimen of that stock—reputed the granddaughter of so illustrious an ancestress—present you with a hideous beverage compounded of questionable goat's milk and unquestionably bad whiskey, which it is incumbent on you to gulp down as best you may, and pay for handsomely besides. From a point near here your journey must now be continued on foot or on ponies, for there is no carriage road; from this to the end of the Gap is about four miles, and then the most strangely beautiful and characteristic scene of the whole neighbourhood opens before you. This is the view over the wild scenery to the right, and chiefly of the Black Valley (Coom-a-Dhuv), than which anything more strikingly picturesque, and awful even, in its gloomy grandeur it has never been our lot to see. The Gap is full of rugged and romantic beauties, but the Black Valley, sinking suddenly from the midst of the purple heath into apparently unfathomable darkness, produces an effect on the beholder almost supernatural in its power and associations. In our opinion this Black Valley is the one unique and distinctive feature of Killarney, which alone would amply repay a journey of double the distance than it would be necessary for any inhabitant of these isles to take, in order that he might once see and never afterwards forget it.

Accompanied now by a troop of mountain damsels, chiefly remarkable for the shortness of their petticoats, the extreme brownness of the naked limbs thereby disclosed, their persistent solicitations for you to buy something from them, and the very great grace and beauty of their forms and features, you proceed, by a comparatively uninteresting route, to the head of the Upper Lake, where boats are waiting to receive you. This place of rendezvous, known by the name of Lord Brandon's Cottage, is also the place where luncheon generally takes place, half the day's work being now supposed to be over, and has, therefore, an interest of its own which, after the very severe work of the few preceding hours, the tourist will not be likely to despise. Once embarked here, you make the tour of the three lakes—which are all united—respectively, landing at such points of

interest as the guides may indicate. Upon this tour we shall not now enter, but merely remark that all the lakes differ somewhat in the character and beauty of their scenery; that of the three the Upper is, in our opinion, the finest; and that all are lovely almost beyond description. A visit to Ross Island probably concludes this day's excursion, which, everything taken into consideration, must be admitted to be one of the most charming and complete which it is possible to meet with in any quarter of the globe.

There are two other regular Killarney excursions, besides many minor ones—the visit to Muckross Abbey and Tore Waterfall, and the ascent of McGillicuddy's Reeks. Of these the former is, in our opinion, the more agreeable, and if not so various and so grand, is in some parts even more sweetly beautiful than that which we have already partially described. Mr. H. A. Herbert, in whose domain the Abbey is situated, most generously and liberally provides every accommodation for tourists who wish to see it, and maintains at his own expense keepers and guides to preserve and show the ruins. Lord Kenmare, whose domain closely adjoins Mr. Herbert's, is equally generous in throwing it open to visitors, and it is pleasant to reflect that no narrow-minded exclusiveness mars the enjoyment of the traveller, or defiles the natural beauties of these favoured parts.

And so we *did* the Lakes of Killarney, and soon after set out upon our voyage homeward, greatly pleased with the result. During our visit we had sought and found occasion more than once to mix and converse with the peasantry, and some of the results of these observations we have already made known to the reader. We are sincerely and sorrowfully convinced that for the Irishman in his own country there is very little hope; very little, at least, until some far more radical reforms are introduced into the country than statesmen have yet contemplated. He must be given an interest *in the soil*. He must feel that patriotism urges him to preserve peace in his country rather than to disturb it. At present all his associations and teachings point to a contrary course. He is born to, and educated in, the belief that his country is in the hands of an alien race, and that it becomes him to hate and to defy the powers that rule at all hazards. He will not have education forced on him by strangers and—as he conceives—enemies; and without education he is unable to understand and appreciate the circumstances and obligations of modern times. The Irish peasant is, to all intents and purposes, in the same mental condition that he was in, four hundred years ago,—that is, in a condition directly opposed to modern systems and ideas. His civilization is still the civilization of the Middle Ages; his virtues and vices are not the virtues and vices of the nineteenth century. The late Fenian conspiracy proves, we think, all this; we were very curious upon the subject of this Fenian conspiracy, and never lost an opportunity of gaining what-

ever information we could upon it. Our firm conviction is, that if every true Irish peasant is not absolutely a sworn Fenian, he is at all events a sworn enemy to England, and ready to join in that or any other conspiracy against her supremacy. It is almost a national characteristic, an instinct, with him to be so; it is the criterion of patriotism among a patriotic people. How long this is fated to be so, or whether our ideas be really just and our observations correct, we leave it to others to decide; we give them here merely as they struck us, and as a not unfitting sequel to a short account of a trip to the Lakes of Killarney.

R. W. C. T.

ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE.

THERE recently appeared in the newspapers a small paragraph of three or four lines which seems to have attracted but little attention, but which, nevertheless, must have carried with it a certain sad significance into many a household. It revealed the gradual eclipse of one who, but a few years ago, had risen and grown in the eyes of men like a comet; of one who, in the stormiest times of popular commotion, seemed to be singled out by Providence as an example of what a working man may become by honest endeavour and prudent self-control. It is not many years since Alexander Somerville was a marked name in this country. The autobiography of "one who has whistled at the plough," which appeared from week to week in the *Manchester Examiner*, earned for the writer a national notoriety, especially amongst those working men who saw in its struggling aspirations, its vivid descriptions, its manly self-assertion, a trace of those dim longings which were stirring their own bosoms. The "Whistler," as he was familiarly called, was felt to be in some sort a prophet, whose personal achievements were themselves foretokens of a new era for the working man. Somerville, by those who knew him only as a writer, was looked upon as a representative working man, and had a much greater and wider influence upon his fellows than had his compatriot, Hugh Miller, whose large natural gifts were squandered upon local theological controversies.

It is, therefore, not without a sense of humiliation that one learns the ultimate condition of this gifted but erratic worker. He now lies, wretched and suffering, in a Canadian hospital, and the kindly editor from whose paper the intelligence comes, proposes that some fund for his relief should be started. This is all. We have no details; no recent particulars of the career which has reached this melancholy termination. The ship which was launched into such fair promise has foundered and gone down; and, lest in these days there should be some to whom the cognomen of the "Whistler at the Plough" conveys but a vague if not wholly unintelligible meaning, we propose briefly to recapitulate a few facts of poor Somerville's life.

He was born in the parish of Oldhamstocks, Haddingtonshire, on the 15th of March, 1811. His father was a mason's labourer, and was at that time in possession of the highest wages he ever earned in his life,—15s. per week. On that sum he supported himself, his wife, and four children, and, by the exercise of an economy which would be impossible in more southerly latitudes, he managed to give his young ones the benefit of what education is to be had in the parish schools. Somerville's father was a keen "Anti-Burgher;" the "wettest, windiest, and coldest storm that ever blew in these regions (the Lammermoors) did not keep him from

the meeting-house on sabbath, no matter what the distance might be, and the distance was often from five to ten miles." It was his boast that during forty years he had not spent forty shillings in drink, and, despite the hardship and poverty of his condition, he is said to have been a man of lively disposition, and of considerable humorous power. His wife was a model Scotch housewife, planning, pinching, mending, and sewing, that her children might be as decent as those of her neighbours, and on great occasions have a halfpenny to spend. Young Somerville was sent to school in winter, and herded cows in summer. He seems to have been a shy, sensitive lad, with a peculiar turn for self-questioning and unconscious metaphysical speculation, and with an impulsiveness that not unfrequently led him into mischief. The first glimpse we have into his inner life is contained in an anecdote of his fourteenth year. It was the last day of harvest, the master had brought down to the field some bottles of whiskey to make the men and women shear like mad creatures, and so finish the work of two days before night; these bottles being placed near a hedge, some of the men who were carting the corn persuaded young Somerville to slip down the field and fetch them a bottle. The depredation was discovered, and Somerville's father beat him, and told him before all the people that he had disgraced a God-fearing family. Whereupon the lad, not able to bear his shame, went to the cows he had been herding, kissed them, bade them farewell, and started off on foot for England. He passed the graveyard where two of his brothers lay buried, and sitting down, boy as he was, he fell to speculating upon what these men might have been had they lived, with a prescience which seems almost to have foreshadowed his own fate. But in the north of England his little stock of money failed him; his heart yearned for home, and with the same impulsiveness which had prompted his setting out, he suddenly turned, walked fifty-two miles without pausing, and reached his father's house. The pain of leaving, he says, was nothing to the pain of returning, for no sooner did his father, who had meanwhile discovered the truth of the matter, meet him, than he asked his son's forgiveness, which was to the young Scotchman something terrible. This sensitiveness appears to have followed him through life; we recognize traces of it everywhere in the records of his long and arduous fight with poverty;—in the story which tells how he and others went from place to place seeking any work they could get, and earning barely sufficient to keep body and soul together. All this time, however, Somerville seems never to have laid aside that habit of self-culture which, among certain classes in Scotland, becomes a second nature. Conscious that their success in the world—nay, that their existence in the world—depends upon a careful improvement of what little rudiments of education they receive in their youth, boys' born of humble Scotch parentage use that groundwork of parochial tuition simply as a basis for further personal effort. A second-hand Latin grammar, a tattered copy of Virgil, become their first preceptors in the classics, and

happy indeed are they whose means allow them to purchase a Greek dictionary and New Testament. But besides what book education Somerville acquired during these years, he was slowly amassing a larger fund of knowledge in his experience of the life of a working man, and in meeting constantly with other working men whose larger experience was communicated to him by means of the surreptitious political harangues delivered during meal-time or after working hours.

But after tramping from county to county for several summers and winters, picking up a scanty wage from whatsoever sort of employment he could get, Somerville found himself almost destitute. Times were bad, money scarce, food dear; then he, in his capacity of itinerant news-agent (such was his last profession), made some blunder, and in a fit of despondency determined to enlist. He became a private in the "Scots Greys," and that act changed the whole future current of his life. For it so happened that during the great popular agitation aroused by efforts to oppose the Reform Bill of 1832, Somerville's regiment was quartered in Birmingham, and Birmingham was one of the head-quarters of the popular commotion. At one time the soldiers were kept, day and night, in hourly expectation of being ordered out to prevent a large body of people proceeding to London with a petition to Parliament. Somerville, in the midst of this confusion, wrote a letter to a local newspaper, declaring that the Scots Greys, to a man, would refuse to draw sword against their countrymen; and this letter, which made some noise, having been traced to him, a charge of insubordination was, singularly enough, at the same time preferred against him for having refused to mount an unmanageable horse, and for the *latter* crime he was sentenced to receive two hundred lashes. But this suspicious charge, and other facts of the case, having leaked out, the newspapers of the country raised such a ferment about the matter, that a royal commission was appointed to investigate the affair, and the commanding officer received a significant reprimand. Thereupon "Private Somerville" became a hero. The newspapers talked of him; everybody talked of him; platform orators grew eloquent upon his case, and poor Somerville was dragged into a notoriety which he feared, and was made the pet of people whom he disliked. He was solicited to join the great assemblage of trades' unions which met in Copenhagen Fields in April, 1834; he refused, and it was presumably owing to a letter of warning written by him to Lord Melbourne that that nobleman did not personally meet the deputation. Again Somerville enlisted, served two years in Spain, and was, on his return, unlucky enough to embroil himself with some agency of claims of payment which the Spanish Government would not admit. To clear off the debt thus incurred he had recourse to his pen, and it was during the following few years that the English nation first heard the definite, manly speech of one who had struggled and battled with many obstacles, but who had now reached his true standpoint. His letters upon the social condition of

Ireland, part of which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* of those days, his autobiography, a history of "Free Trade and the League," an examination into the O'Connor Land scheme, a description of the Spanish campaign—these and other works stamped him as a man of the rarest ability; a man of strong native sense, clear vision, and keen, accurate powers of description; in short, one of the best men who had ever "risen from the ranks." It was of no literary trifling that Richard Cobden wrote, "I know nothing in our literature which, for graphic narrative and picturesque description of men and things, surpasses some of the letters of 'One who has Whistled at the Plough;'" and it is not too much to say that nobody knew anything of the campaign in Spain until Somerville's book was published. Somerville was now at the height of his glory. His services as a writer were eagerly sought. The poor cottar's son found himself a teacher of men; he was made secretary to the Anti-Corn-Law League, and had altogether a most brilliant future before him. But at its very brightest the star began to wane. Under the influence of some inexplicable impulse, he quarrelled with and parted from the men who had been his truest friends; nay, he afterwards attacked them with the utmost vindictiveness. Thereafter the career of poor Somerville was one of those careers of brilliant but vacillating genius which history but lightly touches. Like almost every Scotchman who has made himself a marked man, he wanted the very qualities which are supposed to be characteristic of his countrymen,—for we seek in vain in the lives of such representative Scotchmen as Robert Burns, Christopher North, and Walter Scott, for those evidences of niggardliness, excessive caution and circumspection which are the traditional qualities of their fellows. Whatever may have been the subsequent career of Alexander Somerville, it is surely pitiable that he should now be suffering want and misery in an obscure Canadian hospital. That the strong, valiant life-struggle should so end is surely a climax so tragic as to awaken compassion, even in those whom Somerville, in his hasty impulsiveness of writing, made his enemies. In sight of such a spectacle all enmity should cease, and we should be glad indeed to see the working men of England lend a helping hand to the unhappy exile who has been to them at once a brilliant example and a significant warning.
